

The Masterpiece Library of Short Stories

SET IN 20 VOLUMES

XI

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The Masterpiece Library of Short stories

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Contents

	PAGE
Introductory Essay	J. A. Hammerton 1
D. The Story of Inkle and Yarico	Sir Richard Steele 7
DI. Sir Roger de Coverley's Wooling	" " 11
DII. Story of Le Fevre	Laurence Sterne 16
DIII. The History of the Man in Black	Oliver Goldsmith 24
DIV. The Soldier's Story	" " 29
DV. Alcander and Septimus	" " 33
DVI. The Purple Jar	Maria Edgeworth 37
DVII. The City of the Demons	William Maginn 43
DVIII. Frank Kennedy	William Hamilton Maxwell 50
DIX. The Gridiron	Samuel Lover 66
DX. The Story of G��n��vi��ve	Mrs. Anna Jameson 73
DXI. Daniel O'Rourke	Thomas Crofton Croker 81
DXII. The Lady of Gollerus	" " 88
DXIII. The Stolen Sheep	John Banim 93
DXIV. The Churchyard Watch	" " 104
DXV. The Dilemma of Phadrig	Gerald Griffin 114
DXVI. A Hero-Worshipper	Charles James Lever 123
DXVII. The Ghost and the Bone-Setter	Joseph Sheridan le Fanu 137
DXVIII. A Thorough Gentleman	Canon P. A. Sheehan 144
DXIX. The Comedy of the Old Love	F. Frankfort Moore 151
DXX. The Birthday of the Infanta	Oscar Wilde 169
DXXI. Maureen's Fairing	Jane Barlow 185
DXXII. At the Spotted Lamb	Katherine Tynan 194
DXXIII. The Meeting in the Library	" " 206
DXXIV. A Nursery Tea	Richard Dehan 211
DXXV. They that Mourn	Shan F. Bulloch 227
DXXVI. Th' Ould Boy	" " 233
DXXVII. The Reverend Peter Flannery	Frank Mathew 239
DXXVIII. A Connemara Miracle	" " 244
DXXIX. The Twisting of the Rope	W. B. Yeats 248
DXXX. Rosanna	Agnes Castle 254
DXXXI. The Bewitched Fiddle	Seumas MacManus 265
DXXXII. The Resurrection of Dinny O'Dowd	" " 273
DXXXIII. Priscilla	Dora Sigerson Shorter 282

CONTENTS

	PAGE
DXXXIV. The House of Fahy <i>E. C. Somerville and</i>	
<i>Martin Ross</i>	288
DXXXV. The Breath of Life <i>Daniel Corkery</i>	302
DXXXVI. The Child Saint " "	306
DXXXVII. The City on Mallington Moor . <i>Lord Dunsany</i>	311
DXXXVIII. Coronation of Mr. Thomas Shap . " "	318
DXXXIX. The Sword and the Idol " "	322
DXL. The Hen " "	327
DXLI. The Assigation " "	328
STORY-TELLERS OF THE OVERSEAS <i>Joseph Clayton</i>	329
DXLII. Sister Sall's Courtship <i>T. C. Haliburton</i>	331
DXLIII. " Midnight " <i>William S. Walker</i>	336
DXLIV. Rodman the Boat-steerer <i>Louis Becke</i>	344
DXLV. The Wild Horse of Tartary <i>Clara Morris</i>	356
DXLVI. A Little Grey Glove <i>George Egerton</i>	362
DXLVII. Freedom of the Black-faced Ram . <i>Charles G. D. Roberts</i>	373
DXLVIII. The Pilot at Swan Creek <i>Ralph Connor</i>	383
DXLIX. The Crimson Flag <i>Sir Gilbert Parker, Bart.</i>	391
DL. The Absurd Romance of P'tite	
<i>Louison</i> " "	397
DLI. The Singing of the Bees " "	402
DLII. In a Far-off World <i>Olive Schreiner</i>	404
DLIII. The Artist's Secret " "	406
DLIV. Quarantine <i>H. B. Marriott Watson</i>	407
DLV. When the Sun went Down <i>Henry Lawson</i>	421
DLVI. That there Dog o' Mine " "	424
DLVII. The Doctor's Drive <i>Mary Gaunt</i>	426



The Irish Story-Tellers

THE territorial classification of the authors represented in this Library results in the present volume starting off with three of the most famous names in English literature, none of which might immediately occur to the mind in thinking of "The Irish Story-Tellers." And, of course, if we omit the Gaelic school, Irish literature is essentially a part of English literature: there is no Irish short story as distinct from the English short story. A considerable proportion of the tales in the following pages will be found to have no association whatever with scenes of Irish life, although they contain a very interesting collection of short fictions which are both the work of Irish authors and inspired by Irish life and character.

In association with Addison the name of Richard Steele (1672-1729) takes us back to one of the most memorable periods of English letters. In those early years of the eighteenth century the short story was still a somewhat elusive and undeveloped literary form: it was the great day of the essay. Such fictions as Steele wrote are therefore examples of the transition stage Steele from the essay to the tale, and may be described as essay-stories. "Inkle and Yarico," one of the best examples of these, is the artistic expansion of an anecdote, told with a subtle charm of simplicity which lifts it out of the journalism of the day into the realm of enduring things. It has a further claim to inclusion here, as stated by its author, in that it is the counterpart to the classic story "The Widow of Ephesus" (see Volume 1). In "Sir Roger de Coverley's Wooing" we scent the fragrance of a vanished day and find the short story as a vehicle for the portrayal of character already adequate in form even though the method is still that of the essay.

AS an illustration of the triumph of style over matter, no more delightful piece could be quoted than "The Story of Le Fevre" by Laurence Sterne (1713-1768). This, of course, is one of those few exceptions in the Library where a short complete tale has been chosen from a long work of fiction, "The Sterne Story of Le Fevre" being culled from "Tristram Shandy." It contains a minimum of incident, but what a world of kindly nature

stands revealed in the reading of these half-dozen pages! They recall curiously to the present writer something of the emotional satisfaction with which he first read Pierre Loti's wonderful description of Sylvestre's leave-taking, in "*Pêcheur d'Islande*," an incident of the most ordinary kind, which by the sheer genius of the author's literary treatment is transmuted into a triumph of art.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774), who was born just a year before Sir Richard Steele died, is yet another of the great writers of the past whose works provide us with specimens of the essay-story.

Entirely typical of this is "*The Story of the Man in Black*," Goldsmith presenting in the form of a brief fiction a philosophic view of life that is tinged with cynicism but must be accepted as a true commentary on human hypocrisy. "*The Soldier's Story*," by the same author, is not a short story at all in the strict modern sense, but comes very near to being a picaresque "novel in a nutshell." It is a wonderfully compressed narrative of vagabond life, valuable as a picture of the times and pathetic in its simplicity: reasons which have been held sufficient to justify its inclusion in this collection. Another form of early short story is also taken from the works of Goldsmith, who in "*Alcander and Septimius*" provides an example of the apologue notable for a certain classic stiffness but also for charm of style and some ingenuity of plot.

ONE of the classic writers of Ireland is Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), yet though her name is associated with numerous short stories it is found on critical analysis of these that few of them possess the qualities necessary for admission to such an assembly as the

present, while those that do have suffered from the Maria Edgeworth prolixity of their time. From her children's stories, however, one is selected that must be familiar to many readers. Somewhat naive both in plot and telling, "*The Purple Jar*" has a charm of childish days which marks it out for memory. When we turn to "*The City of Demons*" we touch the work of a very remarkable Irishman whose name was at one time familiar to English readers by reason of its association with *Blackwood's* and *Fraser's*.

William Maginn, who was born in Cork, 1793, and died in London, August 20, 1842, was one of the most variously gifted of Irishmen and seemed to possess every quality except the ability to order his own affairs wisely, resembling in this his more famous countryman, Goldsmith. In "*The City of Demons*" Maginn is also bent upon the apologue, but this time it is of the Eastern type, always the more acceptable, and with great skill he has caught the quaintness of the oriental manner.

THERE is a complete change both of spirit and atmosphere in the next story of our series, "*Frank Kennedy*" by W. Hamilton

Maxwell (1794-1850). Here we have an admirably constructed short story in the historical manner. Maxwell W. H. Maxwell was probably the first of our writers to develop the military novel, which in the hands of James Grant became so widely

popular. His "Stories of Waterloo," from which "Frank Kennedy" is taken, is a work that has been curiously neglected by the reprinters of our standard authors, who have found ready audiences for much matter of far less literary and historic value. With Samuel Lover (1797-1868) we arrive at an author who is Irish of the Irish. All his writings were aimed at expressing Irish character in an Irish way, and immensely popular though he was as recently as thirty or forty years ago, much that he wrote now seems to belong to a very remote day. Humour is a quality curiously apt to go out of fashion unless it be entirely of the mind. Lover's story of "The Gridiron" is just a good old Irish anecdote told in a rollicking manner reminiscent of "Handy Andy," and the humour of it happens to be quite fresh, in which it differs from most of his other short stories. Here one might have expected an example from William Carleton, whose tales of the Irish peasantry used to be so popular; but careful examination of his work has failed to discover an example suitable for inclusion, as they lack both invention and narrative art, and are told with unnecessary circumlocution. There is movement and literary grace, however, in "The Story of Genevieve" by Mrs. Anna Jameson (1797-1860), whose "Characters of Shakespeare's Women" is still a popular classic. This is an old-fashioned romantic fiction and not the less charming on that account, but the author was evidently distrustful of her power to illustrate movement by dialogue, in which the real art of the short story abides. There is the true Irish flavour in "Daniel O'Rourke," the first of two excellent stories by Crofton Croker (1798-1854), famous as a folklorist and author of "Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland." The *Quarterly* said aptly of "Daniel O'Rourke": "It is a fine Dutch picture of nightmare; rivalling in its way the sublimed vision of Burns." Croker's other story, "The Lady of Gollerus," is a fairy tale of sorts, racy of the Irish fisher folk, and might well have served as germ of the idea which Mr. H. G. Wells used with so much humour and ingenuity in "The Lady from the Sea."

AN author of considerable popularity in the days of the "Annals" was John Banim (1798-1842), whose "Tales of the O'Hara Family" had quite a vogue. The two examples of his work here are chosen almost as much for their historical value as for their literary qualities. "The Stolen Sheep" is a good straightforward tale of the hungry times in Ireland, and has both atmosphere and movement; while "The Churchyard Watch," though it cannot be considered an artistic success, is historically important, and from the literary point of view interesting as realising a situation full of tragic possibilities which, in the hands of a more skilled or indeed any present day story-writer, could be developed with thrilling effect. Gerald Griffin (1803-1846) was a young Irishman of much literary promise, whose story "The Collegians" has still a certain popularity as the "Colleen Bawn." "The Dilemma

of Phadrig," an excellent peasant tale, is the best example of Griffin's work in the short story. The fairy doctor plays the part of the Medicine Man of the savages, and the way out of the situation realised by the story-teller is of a piece with the superstition of the times in which it was written. "A Hero Worshipper" by Charles James Lever (1809-1872) introduces one of the most notable figures among

Lever modern Irish authors. Lever's famous stories, such as "Harry Lorrequer," "Charles O'Malley," and half a-dozen others which the reader will readily remember, did in many ways for Ireland what the Waverley Novels did for Scotland. Lever was one of the great novelists in his splendid virility, his breadth of view, his rich imagination, and the vigour of his style. He belonged to the grand school of novel writers that flourished in mid-Victorian days and the tradition of which is being maintained by none of our contemporary writers. "A Hero Worshipper" is selected from his volume "Cornelius O'Dowd," which consists chiefly of stories and sketches originally contributed to *Blackwood's*, and in this we have the real stuff: clever characterisation, brisk and confident narrative, rich humour.

IN the middle years of last century and particularly among Irish and Scottish writers ghost stories and tales of the supernatural were so frequently forthcoming that there must have been a wide demand for them. Among the Irish writers who penned many tales

Le Fanu of the supernatural was the novelist Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873), and he fortunately combined with an ability to thrill his readers an admirable sense of humour, both qualities being well illustrated in "The Ghost and the Bone-Setter." Canon

Canon Sheehan Sheehan (1852-1913) never had any considerable popularity among English readers, but his name and works are treasured among his countrymen and co-religionists, and "A Thorough Gentleman" will show that he could tell an interesting story and display at the same time a certain sardonic wit. In Mr. Frankfort

Frankfort Moore Moore we seem to touch our own day for the first time. One of the most popular of modern authors, Mr. Moore is a good Irishman who has written tales of many lands and different times, but has always seemed to move with most confident step in the gallant days of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "The Comedy of the Old Love" is typical of Mr. Moore's very distinguished gifts of story-telling. And what a piece of perfect beauty in the realm of the fairy story is "The Birthday of the Infanta" from Oscar Wilde's "House of Pomegranates." "Maureen's Fairing," by Jane Barlow, is a good example of that delightful writer's

Katharine Tynan work, which was always essentially Irish in inspiration and in manner. Mrs. Hinkson (Katharine Tynan, b. 1861), on the other hand, is an Irish novelist of wide and established popularity, who most usually seeks her scenes and characters elsewhere than in her native land. Her two stories here reprinted, "At the Spotted Lamb" and "The Meeting in the

Library," are happily contrasted, the one being touched with romance and gaiety and the other awakening deeper emotions. "Richard Dehan" (b. 1864) is another brilliant novelist of Irish origin who has drawn but little upon her native land for the scenes and characters of her books. "Richard Dehan" had written much and well in the way of the short story long before winning fame as a "full-length" novelist, and "A Nursery Tea," for invention, characterisation, and smoothness of form, is probably as good a short story of its length as one could find. Mr. Shan Bullock (b. 1865) is an admirable Irish writer who has gone back to the scenes of his youth for most of his tales, and is probably discovered at his best in such examples as the two from "Ring o' Rushes" included in this volume. Frank Mathew (b. 1865) also seeks to interpret Irish life and character in the same way, and it would be difficult to find other two such perfect idylls of Ireland as "The Reverend Peter Flannery" and "The Connemara Miracle," selected from his delightful book "At the Rising of the Moon."

Richard
Dehan

Shan
Bullock

Mathew

NO living writer, of course, has done more to revivify in Ireland a sense of the old national things than her most eminent living poet, Mr. W. B. Yeats (b. 1865). Chiefly in the theatre he has sought to effect that national literary revival which others have been quick to turn to political ends. "The Twisting of the Rope," which is selected from his "Tales of Red Hanrahan," is a poet's way of telling an old folk story, and very charming and characteristic it must be pronounced. It is rather in favour of our territorial classification that Mrs. Agnes Castle, whom we usually think of as part author with her husband, Egerton Castle, of the daintiest "costume" romances set in old English scenes, should appear, when bracketed with her fellow-countrymen in this volume, as the author of an essentially Irish and very beautiful and moving short story. Seumas MacManus, of course, is Irish to the core in all his writings, and has confined himself to the telling of tales of his native countryside. He could not have done better, as his gifts for this particular and desirable work are high, and if he has not won, or tried to win, a wide audience in the other British Isles for his tales of Irish peasantry, he has achieved both fame and popularity with the much wider reading public of the United States. "The Bewitched Fiddle," delightfully told as it is and full of humour, is probably based upon some old story which its author heard in his boyhood, and "The Resurrection of Dinny O'Dowd," so admirably narrated, has no doubt germinated from some popular local story of the people. A pure work of the imagination and a short story of true tenderness and real beauty is the late Mrs. Shorter's "Priscilla." Dora Sigerson Shorter was one of the sweetest singers of Ireland and a lady who burned with the intensest enthusiasm for all things Irish. In her all too short life she won a

W. B.
Yeats

Agnes
Castle

MacManus

Dora
Sigerson
Shorter

measure of fame with her poetry which will endure and grow, for she had vision and music, and perhaps the attraction of her poetry has a little obscured her remarkable work in prose, of which "The Father Confessor and Other Stories" is sufficient to mark the writer out from the ordinary ruck of story-tellers. It is from that volume that the beautiful story of "Priscilla" is reprinted.

PROBABLY no popular writers of our time are more representative of their native country in the mind of the reading public than the two gifted Irish ladies who have added so considerably to the gaiety of our literature under the style of "E. C. Somerville and Martin Ross." "The Experiences of an Irish R. M." is

**Somerville
and Ross**

one of the modern classics of humour and the life joyous. All the writings of these admirable literary partners are informed with the best of high spirits and a fresh and lively wit. "Martin Ross" was the pen-name of Miss Violet Florence Martin, who died in December 1915, and whose biography has been so sympathetically written by her surviving colleague. "The House of Fahy" illustrates their delightful art at its best, and to the few who are unacquainted with their work it is a certain appetiser for more, while to those who are familiar with it the story will stand a second or a third or even a fourth reading, which is the real "acid test" of merit. In a totally different way from these gay chroniclers

**Daniel
Corkery**

of one of the most fascinating aspects of Irish country life, Mr. Daniel Corkery, an Irish writer of more recent reputation, is equally interpretative of his native land. The greyer things of Ireland, the shadowed lives of its poorer classes, have found in him an exponent whose art is entirely admirable and whose sympathy is profound. Humour of the deeper sort, of course, is by no means absent even from the tragic side of Irish life, and there is a pleasant touch of it in "The Breath of Life," but "The Child Saint" is of sentiment all compact. Each is a perfect study in its way and representative of Mr. Corkery's very fine work, "A Munster Twilight." There is nothing at all that is Irish in the very remarkable work of Lord Dunsany unless it be the wonderful imaginative qualities of his tales. He holds a place in our later literature that is unique, and he is a master of the most beautiful and sensuous style. One reads his books as much for their manner as for

Dunsany

their matter, and the least thing that he has written has distinction: he is essentially an artist in words. Lord Dunsany's effects are all achieved with an ideal economy of description, and yet there is no touch that seems lacking to the completeness of the picture he sets out to paint. The group of selections from his various writings here given will serve well to show the wide range of his imagination from the weird fancy of "Mallington Moor" and the sardonic humour of "Coronation of Mr. Thomas Shap" to the biting satire of "The Hen."

J. A. H.

SIR RICHARD STEELE

1672-1729

THE STORY OF INKLE AND YARICO

ARIETTA is visited by all persons of both sexes, who have any pretence to wit and gallantry. She is in that time of life which is neither affected with the follies of youth, nor infirmities of age ; and her conversation is so mixed with gaiety and prudence, that she is agreeable both to the young and the old. Her behaviour is very frank, without being in the least blamable : and as she is out of the track of any amorous or ambitious pursuits of her own, her visitants entertain her with accounts of themselves very freely, whether they concern their passions or their interests. I made her a visit this afternoon, having been formerly introduced to the honour of her acquaintance by my friend Will Honeycomb, who has prevailed upon her to admit me sometimes into her assembly, as a civil inoffensive man. I found her accompanied with one person only, a commonplace talker, who, upon my entrance, arose, and after a very slight civility sat down again ; then, turning to Arietta, pursued his discourse, which I found was upon the old topic of constancy in love. He went on with great facility in repeating what he talks every day of his life ; and with the ornaments of insignificant laughs and gestures, enforced his arguments by quotations out of plays and songs, which allude to the perjuries of the fair, and the general levity of women. Methought he strove to shine more than ordinarily in his talkative way, that he might insult my silence, and distinguish himself before a woman of Arietta's taste and understanding. She had often an inclination to interrupt him, but could find no opportunity, till the larum ceased of itself, which it did not till he had repeated and murdered the celebrated story of the Ephesian Matron.

Arietta seemed to regard this piece of raillery as an outrage done to her sex ; as indeed I have always observed that women, whether out of a nicer regard to their honour, or what other reason I cannot tell, are more sensibly touched with those general aspersions which are cast upon their sex, than men are by what is said of theirs.

When she had a little recovered herself from the serious anger she was in, she replied in the following manner :

“ Sir, when I consider how perfectly new all you have said on this subject is, and that the story you have given us is not quite two thousand years old, I cannot but think it a piece of presumption to dispute it with you ; but your quotations put me in mind of the fable of the lion and the man. The man walking with that noble animal, showed him, in the ostentation of human superiority, a sign of a man killing a lion. Upon which, the lion said very justly, ‘ We lions are none of us painters, else we could show a hundred men killed by lions for one lion killed by a man.’ You men are writers, and can represent us women as unbecoming as you please in your works, while we are unable to return the injury. You have twice or thrice observed in your discourse that hypocrisy is the very foundation of our education ; and that an ability to dissemble our affections is a professed part of our breeding. These and such other reflections are sprinkled up and down the writings of all ages by authors, who leave behind them memorials of their resentment against the scorn of particular women, in invectives against the whole sex. Such a writer, I doubt not, was the celebrated Petronius, who invented the pleasant aggravations of the frailty of the Ephesian lady ; but when we consider this question between the sexes, which has been either a point of dispute or raillery ever since there were men and women, let us take facts from plain people, and from such as have not either ambition or capacity to embellish their narrations with any beauties of imagination. I was the other day amusing myself with Ligon’s *Account of Barbadoes* ; and, in answer to your well-wrought tale, I will give you (as it dwells upon my memory) out of that honest traveller, in his fifty-fifth page, the history of Inkle and Yarico.

“ ‘ Mr. Thomas Inkle, of London, aged twenty years, embarked in the Downs, on the good ship called the *Achilles*, bound for the West Indies, on the 16th of June, 1647, in order to improve his fortune by trade and merchandise. Our adventurer was the third son of an eminent citizen, who had taken particular care to instil into his mind an early love of gain, by making him a perfect master of numbers, and consequently giving him a quick view of loss and advantage, and preventing the natural impulses of his passions by prepossession towards his interests. With a mind thus turned, young Inkle had a person every way agreeable, a ruddy vigour in his countenance, strength

in his limbs, with ringlets of fair hair loosely flowing on his shoulders. It happened, in the course of the voyage, that the *Achilles*, in some distress, put into a creek on the main of America, in search of provisions. The youth, who is the hero of my story, among others went on shore on this occasion. From their first landing they were observed by a party of Indians, who hid themselves in the woods for that purpose. The English unadvisedly marched a great distance from the shore into the country, and were intercepted by the natives, who slew the greatest number of them. Our adventurer escaped among others, by flying into a forest. Upon his coming into a remote and pathless part of the wood, he threw himself, tired and breathless, on a little hillock, when an Indian maid rushed from a thicket behind him. After the first surprise they appeared mutually agreeable to each other. If the European was highly charmed with the limbs, features, and wild graces of the naked American ; the American was no less taken with the dress, complexion, and shape of an European, covered from head to foot. The Indian grew immediately enamoured of him, and consequently solicitous for his preservation. She therefore conveyed him to a cave, where she gave him a delicious repast of fruits, and led him to a stream to slake his thirst. In the midst of these good offices, she would sometimes play with his hair, and delight in the opposition of its colour to that of her fingers : then open his bosom, then laugh at him for covering it. She was, it seems, a person of distinction, for she every day came to him in a different dress, of the most beautiful shells, bugles,¹ and breches.² She likewise brought him a great many spoils, which her other lovers had presented to her, so that his cave was richly adorned with all the spotted skins of beasts, and most party-coloured feathers of fowls, which that world afforded. To make his confinement more tolerable, she would carry him in the dusk of the evening, or by the favour of moonlight, to unfrequented groves and solitudes, and show him where to lie down in safety, and sleep amidst the falls of waters and melody of nightingales. Her part was to watch and hold him awake in her arms, for fear of her countrymen, and wake him on occasions to consult his safety. In this manner did the lovers pass away their time, till they had learned a language of their own, in which the voyager communicated to his mistress how happy he should be to have her in his country, where she should be clothed in such silks as his waistcoat was made of, and be carried in houses drawn by horses,

¹ Beads.

² Braids.

without being exposed to wind or weather. All this he promised her the enjoyment of, without such fears and alarms as they were there tormented with. In this tender correspondence these lovers lived for several months, when Yarico, instructed by her lover, discovered a vessel on the coast, to which she made signals ; and in the night, with the utmost joy and satisfaction, accompanied him to a ship's crew of his countrymen bound to Barbadoes. When a vessel from the main arrives in that island, it seems the planters come down to the shore, where there is an immediate market of the Indians and other slaves, as with us of horses and oxen.

“ ‘ To be short, Mr. Thomas Inkle, now coming into English territories, began seriously to reflect upon his loss of time, and to weigh with himself how many days' interest of his money he had lost during his stay with Yarico. This thought made the young man very pensive, and careful what account he should be able to give his friends of his voyage. Upon which consideration, the prudent and frugal young man sold Yarico to a Barbadian merchant ; notwithstanding that the poor girl, to incline him to commiserate her condition, told him that she was with child by him : but he only made use of that information to rise in his demands upon the purchaser.’ ”

I was so touched with this story (which I think should be always a counterpart to the Ephesian Matron) that I left the room with tears in my eyes, which a woman of Arietta's good sense did, I am sure, take for greater applause than any compliments I could make her.

SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY'S WOOING

SIR RICHARD STEELE

THE first of our society is a gentleman of Worcestershire, of ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley. His great grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town he lives in Soho Square.

It is said, he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked Bully Dawson in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself and never dressed afterwards; he continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us, had been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. . . .

He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty, keeps a good house in both town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way upstairs to a visit. I must not omit that Sir Roger is a justice of the *Quorum*; that he fills

the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause by explaining a passage in the game-act. . . .

I mentioned a great affliction which my friend Sir Roger had met with in his youth ; which was no less than a disappointment in love. It happened this evening that we fell into a very pleasing walk at a distance from his house. As soon as we came into it,

" It is," quoth the good old man, looking round him with a smile, " very hard that any part of my land should be settled upon one who has used me so ill as the perverse widow did ; and yet I am sure I could not see a sprig of any bough of this whole walk of trees, but I should reflect upon her and her severity. She has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world. You are to know this was the place wherein I used to muse upon her ; and by that custom I can never come into it, but the same tender sentiments revive in my mind, as if I had actually walked with that beautiful creature under these shades. I have been fool enough to carve her name on the bark of several of these trees ; so unhappy is the condition of men in love, to attempt the removing of their passion by the methods which serve only to imprint it deeper. She has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world."

Here followed a profound silence, and I was not displeased to observe my friend falling so naturally into a discourse, which I had ever before taken notice he industriously avoided. After a very long pause he entered upon an account of this great circumstance in his life, with an air which I thought raised my idea of him above what I had ever had before ; and gave me the picture of that cheerful mind of his before it received that stroke which has ever since affected his words and actions. But he went on as follows :

" I came to my estate in my twenty-second year, and resolved to follow the steps of the most worthy of my ancestors who have inhabited this spot of earth before me, in all the methods of hospitality and good neighbourhood, for the sake of my fame ; and in country sports and recreations, for the sake of my health. In my twenty-third year I was obliged to serve as sheriff of the county ; and in my servants, officers, and whole equipage, indulged the pleasure of a young man (who did not think ill of his own person) in taking that public occasion of showing my figure and behaviour to advantage.

" You may easily imagine to yourself what appearance I made, who am pretty tall, rid[e] well, and was very well dressed, at the head of

a whole county, with music before me, a feather in my hat, and my horse well bitted. I can assure you I was not a little pleased with the kind looks and glances I had from all the balconies and windows as I rode to the hall where the assizes were held. But when I came there, a beautiful creature in a widow's habit sat in court to hear the event of a cause concerning her dower. This commanding creature (who was born for destruction of all who behold her) put on such a resignation in her countenance, and bore the whispers of all around the court with such a pretty uneasiness, I warrant you, and then recovered herself from one eye to another, till she was perfectly confused by meeting something so wistful in all she encountered, that at last, with a murrain to her, she cast her bewitching eye upon me. I no sooner met it, but I bowed like a great surprised booby ; and knowing her cause to be the first which came on, I cried like a captivated calf as I was,

“ ‘ Make way for the defendant's witnesses.’ ”

“ This sudden partiality made all the county immediately see the sheriff also was become a slave to the fine widow. During the time her cause was upon trial she behaved herself, I warrant you, with such a deep attention to her business, took opportunities to have little billets handed to her counsel, then would be in such a pretty confusion, occasioned, you must know, by acting before so much company, that not only I but the whole court was prejudiced in her favour ; and all that the next heir to her husband had to urge was thought so groundless and frivolous, that when it came to her counsel to reply, there was not half so much said as every one besides in the court thought he could have urged to her advantage.

“ You must understand, sir, this perverse woman is one of those unaccountable creatures that secretly rejoice in the admiration of men, but indulge themselves in no further consequences. Hence it is that she has ever had a train of admirers, and she removes from her slaves in town to those in the country, according to the seasons of the year. She is a reading lady, and far gone in the pleasures of friendship ; she is always accompanied by a confidant, who is witness to her daily protestations against our sex, and consequently a bar to her first steps towards love, upon the strength of her own maxims and declarations.

“ How ever, I must needs say this accomplished mistress of mine has distinguished me above the rest, and has been known to declare Sir Roger de Coverley was the tamest and most human of all the brutes in the country. I was told she said so by one who thought he

rallied me ; but upon the strength of this slender encouragement, of being thought least detestable, I made new liveries, new-paired my coach-horses, sent them all to town to be bitted, and taught to throw their legs well, and move all together, before I pretended to cross the country and wait upon her.

“ As soon as I thought my retinue suitable to the character of my fortune and youth, I set out from hence to make my addresses. The particular skill of this lady has ever been to inflame your wishes, and yet command respect. To make her mistress of this art, she has a greater share of knowledge, wit, and good sense, than is usual, even among men of merit. Then she is beautiful beyond the race of women. If you won't let her go on with a certain artifice with her eyes and the skill of beauty, she will arm herself with her real charms, and strike you with admiration instead of desire. It is certain that if you were to behold the whole woman, there is that dignity in her aspect, that composure in her motion, that complacency in her manner, that if her form makes you hope, her merit makes you fear. But then again, she is such a desperate scholar, that no country-gentleman can approach her without being a jest.

“ As I was going to tell you, when I came to her house I was admitted to her presence with great civility ; at the same time she placed herself to be first seen by me in such an attitude as I think you call the posture of a picture, that she discovered new charms, and I at last came towards her with such an awe as made me speechless. This she no sooner observed but she made her advantage of it, and began a discourse to me concerning love and honour, as they both are followed by pretenders, and the real votaries to them. When she had discussed these points in a discourse, which I verily believe was as learned as the best philosopher in Europe could possibly make, she asked me whether she was so happy as to fall in with my sentiments on these important particulars. Her confidant sat by her, and upon my being in the last confusion and silence, this malicious aid of hers, turning to her, says, ‘ I am very glad to observe Sir Roger pauses upon this subject, and seems resolved to deliver all his sentiments upon the matter when he pleases to speak.’ They both kept their countenances, and after I had sat half an hour meditating how to behave before such profound casuists, I rose up and took my leave.

“ Chance has since that time thrown me very often in her way, and she as often has directed a discourse to me which I do not under-

stand. This barbarity has kept me ever at a distance from the most beautiful object my eyes ever beheld. It is thus also she deals with all mankind, and you must make love to her, as you would conquer the Sphinx, by posing her. But were she like other women, and that there were any talking to her, how constant must the pleasure of that man be who could converse with a creature——

“ But after all, you may be sure her heart is fixed on some one or other ; and yet I have been credibly informed ; but who can believe half that is said ! After she had done speaking to me, she put her hand to her bosom, and adjusted her tucker. Then she cast her eyes a little down upon my beholding her too earnestly. They say she sings excellently : her voice in her ordinary speech has something in it inexpressibly sweet. You must know I dined with her at a public table the day after I first saw her, and she helped me to some tansy in the eye of all the gentlemen in the country : she has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world. I can assure you, sir, were you to behold her, you would be in the same condition ; for as her speech is music her form is angelic. But I find I grow irregular while I am talking of her ; but indeed it would be stupidity to be unconcerned at such perfection. Oh the excellent creature, she is as inimitable to all women as she is inaccessible to all men.”

I found my friend begin to rave, and insensibly led him towards the house, that we might be joined by some other company ; and am convinced that the widow is the secret cause of all that inconsistency which appears in some parts of my friend's discourse ; though he has so much command of himself as not directly to mention her, yet according to that of Martial, which one knows not how to render in English, *Dum tacet hanc loquitur*. I shall end this paper with that whole epigram, which represents with much humour my honest friend's condition ;

Let *Rufus* weep, rejoice, stand, sit, or walk,
Still he can nothing but of *Nævia* talk ;
Let him eat, drink, ask questions, or dispute,
Still he must speak of *Nævia*, or be mute.
He writ to his father, ending with this line,
I am, my lovely *Nævia*, ever thine.

LAURENCE STERNE

1718-1768

THE STORY OF LE FEVRE

MY uncle Toby was one evening sitting at his supper, when the landlord of a little inn in the village came into the parlour, with an empty phial in his hand, to beg a glass or two of sack :

“ ’Tis for a poor gentleman—I think of the army,” said the landlord, “ who has been taken ill at my house four days ago, and has never held up his head since, or had a desire to taste anything till just now, that he has a fancy for a glass of sack and a thin toast ;—I think, said he, taking his hand from his forehead, it would comfort me.—

“ If I could neither beg, borrow, nor buy such a thing,” added the landlord, “ I would almost steal it for the poor gentleman, he is so ill.—I hope in God he will still mend,” continued he,—“ we are all of us concerned for him.”

“ Thou art a good-natured soul, I will answer for thee,” cried my uncle Toby, “ and thou shalt drink the poor gentleman’s health in a glass of sack thyself,—and take a couple of bottles, with my service, and tell him he is heartily welcome to them, and to a dozen more if they will do him good.

“ Though I am persuaded,” said my uncle Toby, as the landlord shut the door, “ he is a very compassionate fellow, Trim, yet I cannot help entertaining a high opinion of his guest too ; there must be something more than common in him, that in so short a time should win so much on the affections of his host ” :—

“ And of his whole family,” added the corporal, “ for they are all concerned for him.”

“ Step after him,” said my uncle Toby, “ do, Trim, and ask if he knows his name.”

“ I have quite forgot it, truly,” said the landlord, coming back into the parlour with the corporal, “ but I can ask his son again.”

“ Has he a son with him then ? ” said my uncle Toby.

“ A boy,” replied the landlord, “ of about eleven or twelve years of age ; but the poor creature has tasted almost as little as his father ; he does nothing but mourn and lament for him night and day : he has not stirred from the bedside these two days.”

My uncle Toby laid down his knife and fork, and thrust his plate from before him as the landlord gave him the account ; and Trim, without being ordered, took it away without saying one word, and in a few minutes after brought him his pipe and tobacco.

" Stay in the room a little," said my uncle Toby. " Trim ! " said my uncle Toby, after he had lighted his pipe and smoked about a dozen whiffs—Trim came in front of his master and made his bow—my uncle Toby smoked on, and said no more. " Corporal ! " said my uncle Toby ; the corporal made his bow—my uncle Toby proceeded no farther, but finished his pipe.

" Trim ! " said my uncle Toby, " I have a project in my head, as it is a bad night, of wrapping myself up warm in my roquelaure, and paying a visit to this poor gentleman."

" Your honour's roquelaure," replied the corporal, " has not once been had on since the night before your honour received your wound, when we mounted guard in the trenches before the gate at St. Nicholas ; and besides it is so cold and rainy a night, that what with the roquelaure, and what with the weather 'twill be enough to give your honour your death, and bring on your honour's torment in your groin."

" I fear so," replied my uncle Toby ; " but I am not at rest in my mind, Trim, since the account the landlord has given me. I wish I had not known so much of this affair," added my uncle Toby, " or that I had known more of it : how shall we manage it ? "

" Leave it, an' please your honour, to me," quoth the corporal ; " I'll take my hat and stick, and go to the house and reconnoitre, and act accordingly ; and I will bring your honour a full account in an hour."

" Thou shalt go, Trim," said my uncle Toby, " and here's a shilling for thee to drink with his servant."

" I shall get it all out of him," said the corporal, shutting the door.

My uncle Toby filled his second pipe ; and had it not been that he now and then wandered from the point, with considering whether it was not full as well to have the curtain of the tenaille a straight line as a crooked one, he might be said to have thought of nothing else but poor Le Fevre and his boy the whole time he smoked it.

It was not till my uncle Toby had knocked the ashes out of his third pipe that Corporal Trim returned from the inn, and gave him the following account :—" I despaired at first," said the corporal, " of

being able to bring back to your honour any kind of intelligence concerning the poor sick lieutenant."

"Is he in the army then?" said my uncle Toby.

"He is," said the corporal.

"And in what regiment?" said my uncle Toby.

"I'll tell your honour," replied the corporal, "everything straight forwards, as I learned it."

"Then, Trim, I'll fill another pipe," said my uncle Toby, "and not interrupt thee till thou hast done; so sit down at thy ease, Trim, in the window seat, and begin thy story again."

The corporal made his old bow, which generally spoke as plain as a bow could speak it—*your honour is good*:—and having done that, he sat down as he was ordered, and began the story to my uncle Toby over again in pretty nearly the same words.

"I despaired at first," said the corporal, "of being able to bring back any intelligence to your honour about the lieutenant and his son; for when I asked where his servant was, from whom I made myself sure of knowing everything which was proper to be asked,—"

"That's a right distinction, Trim," said my uncle Toby.

"I was answered, and please your honour, that he had no servant with him; that he had come to the inn with hired horses, which, on finding himself unable to proceed (to join, I suppose, the regiment), he had dismissed the morning after he came.—If I get better, my dear, said he, as he gave his purse to his son to pay the man, we can hire horses from hence.—But, alas! the poor gentleman will never get from hence, said the landlady to me, for I heard the death-watch all night long; and when he dies the youth his son will certainly die with him; for he is broken-hearted already.

"I was hearing this account," continued the corporal, "when the youth came into the kitchen, to order the thin toast the landlord spoke of;—but I will do it for my father myself, said the youth. Pray let me save you the trouble, young gentleman, said I, taking up a fork for that purpose, and offering him a chair to sit down by the fire, whilst I did it.—I believe, sir, said he, very modestly, I can please him best myself.—I am sure, said I, his honour will not like the toast the worse for being toasted by an old soldier. The youth took hold of my hand, and instantly burst into tears."

"Poor youth!" said my uncle Toby, "he has been bred up from

an infant in the army, and the name of a soldier, Trim, sounded in his ears like the name of a friend :—I wish I had him here."

"I never, in the longest march," said the corporal, "had so great a mind to my dinner as I had to cry with him for company; what could be the matter with me, an' please your honour?"

"Nothing in the world, Trim," said my uncle Toby, blowing his nose, "but that thou art a good-natured fellow."

"When I gave him the toast," continued the corporal, "I thought it was proper to tell him I was Captain Shandy's servant, and that your honour (though a stranger) was extremely concerned for his father: and that if there was anything in your house or cellar"—("and thou mightest have added my purse too," said my uncle Toby)—"he was heartily welcome to it: he made a very low bow (which was meant to your honour), but no answer, for his heart was so full—so he went upstairs with the toast.—I warrant you, my dear, said I, as I opened the kitchen door, your father will be well again. Mr. Yorick's curate was smoking a pipe by the kitchen fire; but said not a word, good or bad, to comfort the youth. I thought it wrong," added the corporal.

"I think so too," said my uncle Toby.

"When the lieutenant had taken his glass of sack and toast he felt himself a little revived, and sent down into the kitchen to let me know that in about ten minutes he should be glad if I would step upstairs. I believe, said the landlord, he is going to say his prayers, for there was a book laid upon the chair by his bedside, and as I shut the door I saw his son take up a cushion. I thought, said the curate, that you gentlemen of the army, Mr. Trim, never said your prayers at all.—I heard the poor gentleman say his prayers last night, said the landlady, very devoutly, and with my own ears, or I could not have believed it.—Are you sure of it? replied the curate. A soldier, an' please your reverence, said I, prays as often (of his own accord) as a parson; and when he is fighting for his king, and for his own life, and for his honour too, he has the most reason to pray to God of any one in the whole world."

"'Twas well said of thee, Trim," said my uncle Toby.

"But when a soldier, said I, an' please your reverence, has been standing for twelve hours together in the trenches, up to his knees in cold water, or engaged, said I, for months together in long and dangerous marches—harassed, perhaps, in his rear to-day—harassing others to-morrow—detached here—countermanded there—resting this night out upon his arms—beat up in his shirt the next—benumbed in his

joints—perhaps without straw in his tent to kneel upon—may say his prayers *how* and *when* he can. I believe, said I,—for I was piqued,” quoth the corporal, “for the reputation of the army,—I believe, an’ please your reverence, said I, that when a soldier gets time to pray, he prays as heartily as a parson, though not with all his fuss and hypocrisy.”

“Thou shouldest not have said that, Trim,” said my uncle Toby, “for God only knows who is a hypocrite, and who is not: at the great and general review of us all, corporal, at the day of judgment (and not till then), it will be seen who have done their duties in this world, and who have not; and we shall be advanced, Trim, accordingly.” “I hope we shall,” said Trim.

“It is in the Scripture,” said my uncle Toby; “and I will show it thee to-morrow; in the meantime, we may depend upon it, Trim, for our comfort,” said my uncle Toby, “that God Almighty is so good and just a governor of the world, that if we have but done our duties in it, it will never be inquired into whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one.” “I hope not,” said the corporal.

“But go on, Trim,” said my uncle Toby, “with thy story.”

“When I went up,” continued the corporal, “into the lieutenant’s room, which I did not do till the expiration of the ten minutes, he was lying in his bed, with his head raised upon his hand, with his elbow upon the pillow, and a clean white cambric handkerchief beside it. The youth was just stooping down to take up the cushion upon which I suppose he had been kneeling. The book was laid upon the bed; and as he rose, in taking up the cushion with one hand, he reached out his other to take it away at the same time.—Let it remain there, my dear, said the lieutenant. He did not offer to speak to me till I had walked up close to his bedside.—If you be Captain Shandy’s servant, said he, you must present my thanks to your master, with my little boy’s thanks along with them, for his courtesy to me: if he was of Levens’, said the lieutenant—I told him your honour was—Then, said he, I served three campaigns with him in Flanders, and remember him,—but ’tis most likely, as I had not the honour of any acquaintance with him, that he knows nothing of me. You will tell him, however, that the person his good-nature has laid under obligation to him is one Le Fevre, a lieutenant in Angus’—but he knows me not, said he a second time, musing:—possibly he may my story, added he—Pray tell the captain I was the ensign at Breda, whose wife was most un-

fortunately killed with a musket shot, as she lay in my arms in my tent.—I remember the story, an' please your honour, said I, very well. Do you so? said he, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief, then well may I. In saying this he drew a little ring out of his bosom, which seemed tied with a black ribbon about his neck, and kissed it twice. Here, Billy, said he.—The boy flew across the room to the bedside, and falling down upon his knee, took the ring in his hand, and kissed it too, then kissed his father, and sat down upon the bed and wept."

"I wish," said my uncle Toby, with a deep sigh, "I wish, Trim, I was asleep."

"Your honour," replied the corporal, "is too much concerned; shall I pour your honour out a glass of sack to your pipe?"

"Do, Trim," said my uncle Toby.

"I remember," said my uncle Toby, sighing again, "the story of the ensign and his wife, with a circumstance his modesty omitted; and particularly well that he, as well as she, on some account or other (I have forgot what) was universally pitied by the whole regiment;—but finish the story thou art on."

"'Tis finished already," said the corporal, "for I could stay no longer, so wished his honour a good-night: young Le Fevre rose from off the bed, and saw me to the bottom of the stairs: and as we went down together, told they had come from Ireland, and were on their route to join the regiment in Flanders. But, alas!" said the corporal, "the lieutenant's last day's march is over."

"Then what is to become of his poor boy?" cried my uncle Toby.

It was to my uncle Toby's eternal honour—though I tell it only for the sake of those who, when cooped in betwixt a natural and a positive law, know not for their souls which way in the world to turn themselves—that, notwithstanding my uncle Toby was warmly engaged at that time in carrying on the siege of Dendermond, parallel with the allies, who pressed theirs on so vigorously that they scarce allowed him time to get his dinner:—that nevertheless he gave up Dendermond, though he had already made a lodgment upon the counterscarp;—and bent his whole thoughts towards the private distresses at the inn: and, except that he ordered the garden gate to be bolted up, by which he might be said to have turned the siege of Dendermond into a blockade, he left Dendermond to itself,—to be relieved or not by the French king as the French king thought good; and only considered how he himself should relieve the poor lieutenant

and his son. That kind Being, who is a friend to the friendless, shall recompense thee for this.

"Thou hast left this matter short," said my uncle Toby to the corporal, as he was putting him to bed, "and I will tell thee in what, Trim. In the first place, when thou madest an offer of my services to Le Fevre,—as sickness and travelling are both expensive, and thou knewest he was but a poor lieutenant, with a son to subsist as well as himself out of his pay, that thou didst not make an offer to him of my purse ; because, had he stood in need, thou knowest, Trim, he had been as welcome to it as myself."

"Your honour knows," said the corporal, "I had no orders."

"True," quoth my uncle Toby,—"thou didst very right, Trim, as a soldier, but certainly very wrong as a man."

"In the second place, for which, indeed, thou hast the same excuse," continued my uncle Toby,—"when thou offeredst him whatever was in my house, thou shouldst have offered him my house too. A sick brother officer should have the best quarters, Trim ; and if we had him with us, we could tend and look to him.—Thou art an excellent nurse thyself, Trim, and what with thy care of him, and the old woman's, and his boy's, and mine together, we might recruit him again at once, and set him upon his legs.—"

"In a fortnight or three weeks," added my uncle Toby, smiling, "he might march."

"He will never march, an' please your honour, in this world," said the corporal.

"He *will* march," said my uncle Toby, rising up from the side of the bed, with one shoe off.

"An' please your honour," said the corporal, "he will never march, but to his grave."

"He *shall* march," cried my uncle Toby, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch, "he shall march to his regiment." "He cannot stand it," said the corporal.

"He shall be supported," said my uncle Toby.

"He'll drop at last," said the corporal, "and what will become of his boy ?"

"He shall not drop," said my uncle Toby, firmly.

"A-well-a-day ! do what we can for him," said Trim, maintaining his point,—"the poor soul will die."

"He shall not die, by God !" cried my uncle Toby.

The accusing spirit, which flew up to heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in ; and the recording angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever.

My uncle Toby went to his bureau, put his purse into his breeches pocket, and having ordered the corporal to go early in the morning for a physician, he went to bed, and fell asleep.

The sun looked bright the morning after to every eye in the village but Le Fevre's and his afflicted son's ; the hand of death pressed heavy upon his eyelids ; and hardly could the wheel at the cistern turn round its circle, when my uncle Toby, who had rose up an hour before his wonted time, entered the lieutenant's room, and without preface or apology sat himself down by the chair at the bedside, and independently of all modes and customs opened the curtain in the manner an old friend and brother officer would have done it, and asked him how he did,—how he had rested in the night,—what was his complaint,—where was his pain,—and what he could do to help him ; and, without giving him time to answer any one of the inquiries, went on and told him of the little plan which he had been concerting with the corporal the night before for him.

" You shall go home directly, Le Fevre," said my uncle Toby, " to my house, and we'll send for a doctor to see what's the matter,—and we'll have an apothecary,—and the corporal shall be your nurse ;—and I'll be your servant, Le Fevre."

There was a frankness in my uncle Toby—not the effect of familiarity, but the cause of it—which let you at once into his soul, and showed you the goodness of his nature. To this there was something in his looks, and voice, and manner, superadded, which eternally beckoned to the unfortunate to come and take shelter under him, so that before my uncle Toby had half finished the kind offers he was making to the father, had the son insensibly pressed up close to his knees, and had taken hold of the breast of his coat, and was pulling it towards him. The blood and spirits of Le Fevre, which were waxing cold and slow within him, and were retreating to their last citadel, the heart—rallied back,—the film forsook his eyes for a moment ;—he looked up wishfully in my uncle Toby's face ;—then cast a look upon his boy ; and that ligament, fine as it was, was never broken.

Nature instantly ebbed again ; the film returned to its place ; the pulse fluttered—stopped—went on, throbbed—stopped again—moved—stopped. Shall I go on ? No.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH
1728-1774

THE HISTORY OF THE MAN IN BLACK

MY father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the church. His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them, they returned an equivalent in praise; and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army, influenced my father at the head of his table; he told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that; but the story of Taffy in the sedan chair, was sure to set the table in a roar: thus his pleasure increased in proportion to the pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it; he had no intentions of leaving his children money, for that was dross; he was resolved they should have learning; for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose he undertook to instruct us himself; and took as much pains to form our morals as to improve our understanding. We were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own; to regard the *human face divine* with affection and esteem; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress; in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of *giving away* thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of *getting* a farthing.

I cannot avoid imagining, that thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the little cunning which Nature had given me, I resembled, upon my first entrance into the busy and insidious world, one of those gladiators who were exposed with armour in the amphitheatre at Rome. My father, however, who had only seen the world on one side, seemed to triumph in my superior discern-

ment ; though my whole stock of wisdom consisted in being able to talk like himself upon subjects that once were useful, because they were then topics of the busy world ; but that now were utterly useless, because connected with the busy world no longer.

The first opportunity he had of finding his expectations disappointed, was at the very middling figure I made in the university ; he had flattered himself that he should soon see me rising into the foremost rank in literary reputation, but was mortified to find me utterly unnoticed and unknown. His disappointment might have been partly ascribed to his having overrated my talents, and partly to my dislike of mathematical reasonings at a time when my imagination and memory, yet unsatisfied, were more eager after new objects, than desirous of reasoning upon those I knew. This did not, however, please my tutors, who observed indeed, that I was a little dull ; but at the same time allowed, that I seemed to be very *good-natured*, and had no harm in me.

After I had resided at college seven years my father died, and left me—his blessing. Thus shoved from shore without ill-nature to protect, or cunning to guide, or proper stores to subsist me in so dangerous a voyage, I was obliged to embark in the wide world at twenty-two. But, in order to settle in life, my friends *advised* (for they always advise when they begin to despise us), they advised me, I say, to go into orders.

To be obliged to wear a long wig, when I liked a short one, or a black coat, when I generally dressed in brown, I thought was such a restraint upon my liberty, that I absolutely rejected the proposal. A priest in England is not the same mortified creature with a bonze in China ; with us, not he that fasts best, but eats best, is reckoned the best liver ; yet I rejected a life of luxury, indolence, and ease, from no other consideration but that boyish one of dress. So that my friends were now perfectly satisfied I was undone ; and yet they thought it a pity for one who had not the least harm in him, and was so very good-natured.

Poverty naturally begets dependence, and I was admitted as flatterer to a great man. At first I was surprised that the situation of a flatterer at a great man's table could be thought disagreeable ; there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke, and laughing when he looked round for applause. This even good manners might have obliged me to perform. I found, however, too soon, that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself ; and from

that very moment flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right, than at receiving his absurdities with submission ; to flatter those we do not know is an easy task ; but to flatter our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise, my falsehood went to my conscience ; his lordship soon perceived me to be very unfit for service : I was therefore discharged, my patron at the same time being graciously pleased to observe, that he believed I was tolerably good-natured, and had not the least harm in me.

Disappointed in ambition, I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some reason to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking. She had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintance, and at her aunt among the number ; she always observed, that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observation in my own favour. She continually talked, in my company, of friendship and the beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp my rival's high-heeled shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favour ; so, after resolving and re-resolving, I had courage enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness ; which was no more than—that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with high-heeled shoes ! By way of consolation, however, she observed that, though I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt would probably kindle her into sensibility ; as the old lady always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me.

Yet, still I had friends, numerous friends, and to them I was resolved to apply. O Friendship ! thou fond soother of the human breast, to thee we fly in every calamity ; to thee the wretched seek for succour ; on thee the care-tired son of misery fondly relies ; from thy kind assistance the unfortunate always hopes relief, and may be ever sure of—disappointment. My first application was to a city scrivener, who had frequently offered to lend me money when he knew I did not want it. I informed him that now was the time to put his friendship to the test ; that I wanted to borrow a couple of hundreds for a certain occasion, and was resolved to take it up from him.

" And pray, Sir," cried my friend, " do you want all this money ? "

" Indeed I never wanted it more," returned I.

" I am sorry for that," cries the scrivener, " with all my heart ; for they who want money when they come to borrow, will always want money when they should come to pay."

From him I flew with indignation to one of the best friends I had in the world, and made the same request.

" Indeed, Mr. Drybone," cries my friend, " I always thought it would come to this. You know, Sir, I would not advise you but for your own good ; but your conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of your acquaintance always thought you a very silly fellow. Let me see—you want two hundred pounds. Do you only want two hundred, Sir, exactly ? "

" To confess a truth," returned I, " I shall want three hundred ; but then I have another friend from whom I can borrow the rest."

" Why, then," replied my friend, " if you would take my advice (and you know I should not presume to advise you but for your own good), I would recommend it to you to borrow the whole sum from that other friend ; and then one note will serve for all, you know."

Poverty now began to come fast upon me ; yet instead of growing more provident or cautious as I grew poor, I became every day more indolent and simple. A friend was arrested for fifty pounds ; I was unable to extricate him except by becoming his bail. When at liberty he fled from his creditors, and left me to take his place : in prison I expected greater satisfactions than I had enjoyed at large. I hoped to converse with men in this new world, simple and believing like myself, but I found them as cunning and as cautious as those in the world I had left behind. They spunged up my money whilst it lasted, borrowed my coals and never paid for them, and cheated me when I played at cribbage. All this was done because they believed me to be very good-natured, and knew that I had no harm in me.

Upon my first entrance into this mansion, which is to some the abode of despair, I felt no sensations different from those I experienced abroad. I was now on one side of the door, and those who were unconfined were on the other : this was all the difference between us. At first, indeed, I felt some uneasiness, in considering how I should be able to provide this week for the wants of the week ensuing ; but after some time, if I found myself sure of eating one day, I never troubled my head how I was to be supplied another. I seized every precarious

meal with the utmost good humour ; indulged no rants of spleen at my situation ; never called down heaven and all the stars to behold me dining upon an halfpenny-worth of radishes ; my very companions were taught to believe that I liked salad better than mutton. I contented myself with thinking, that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown ; considered that all that happened was best ; laughed when I was not in pain ; took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often, for want of more books and company.

How long I might have continued in this torpid state of simplicity I cannot tell, had I not been roused by seeing an old acquaintance, whom I knew to be a prudent blockhead, preferred to a place in the Government. I now found that I had pursued a wrong track, and that the true way of being able to relieve others, was first to aim at independence myself ; my immediate care, therefore, was to leave my present habitation, and make an entire reformation in my conduct and behaviour. For a free, open, undesigning deportment, I put on that of closeness, prudence and economy. One of the most heroic actions I ever performed, and for which I shall praise myself as long as I live, was the refusing half-a-crown to an old acquaintance, at the time when he wanted it, and I had it to spare ; for this alone I deserve to be decreed an ovation.

I now, therefore, pursued a course of uninterrupted frugality, seldom wanted a dinner, and was consequently invited to twenty. I soon began to get the character of a saving hunk that had money, and insensibly grew into esteem. Neighbours have asked my advice in the disposal of their daughters, and I have always taken care not to give any. I have contracted a friendship with an alderman, only by observing, that if we take a farthing from a thousand pounds, it will be a thousand pounds no longer. I have been invited to a pawnbroker's table, by pretending to hate gravy ; and am now actually upon treaty of marriage with a rich widow, for only having observed that the bread was rising. If ever I am asked a question, whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and look wise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity, I observe that the world is filled with imposters, and take a certain method of not being deceived, by never relieving. In short, I now find the truest way of finding esteem, even from the indigent, is *to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give.*

THE SOLDIER'S STORY

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

ACCIDENTALLY meeting some days ago a poor fellow begging at one of the outlets of this town, with a wooden leg, I was curious to learn what had reduced him to his present situation; and after giving him what I thought proper, desired to know the history of his life and misfortunes, and the manner in which he was reduced to his present distress. The disabled soldier, for such he was, with an intrepidity truly British, leaning on his crutch, put himself into an attitude to comply with my request, and gave me his history as follows :—

“ As for misfortunes, Sir, I cannot pretend to have gone through more than others. Except the loss of my limb, and my being obliged to beg, I don't know any reason, thank Heaven, that I have to complain ; there are some who have lost both legs and an eye : but, thank Heaven, it is not quite so bad with me.

“ My father was a labourer in the country, and died when I was five years old ; so I was put upon the parish. As he had been a wandering sort of a man, the parishioners were not able to tell to what parish I belonged, or where I was born ; so they sent me to another parish, and that parish sent me to a third ; till at last it was thought I belonged to no parish at all. At length, however, they fixed me. I had some disposition to be a scholar, and had actually learned my letters ; but the master of the workhouse put me to business as soon as I was able to handle a mallet.

“ Here I lived an easy kind of a life for five years ; I only wrought ten hours in the day, and had my meat and drink provided for my labour. It is true, I was not suffered to stir far from the house, for fear I should run away : but what of that ? I had the liberty of the whole house, and the yard before the door, and that was enough for me.

“ I was next bound out to a farmer, where I was up both early and late, but I ate and drank well, and liked my business well enough, till he died. Being then obliged to provide for myself, I was resolved to go and seek my fortune. Thus I lived, and went from town to town,

working when I could get employment, and starving when I could get none ; and might have lived so still ; but happening one day to go through a field belonging to a magistrate, I spied a hare crossing the path just before me. I believe the devil put it in my head to fling my stick at it : well, what will you have on it ? I killed the hare, and was bringing it away in triumph, when the Justice himself met me : he called me a villain, and collaring me, desired I would give an account of myself.

“ I began immediately to give a full account of all that I knew of my breed, seed, and generation ; but though I gave a very long account, the Justice said, I could give no account of myself ; so I was indicted, and found guilty of being poor, and sent to Newgate, in order to be transported to the Plantations.

“ People may say this and that of being in gaol ; but for my part I found Newgate as agreeable a place as ever I was in, in all my life. I had my belly-full to eat and drink, and did no work ; but alas, this kind of life was too good to last for ever ! I was taken out of prison after five months, put on board of a ship, and sent off with two hundred more. Our passage was but indifferent, for we were all confined in the hold, and died very fast, for want of sweet air and provisions ; but for my part, I did not want meat, because I had a fever all the way : Providence was kind ; when provisions grew short, it took away my desire of eating. When we came ashore, we were sold to the planters. I was bound for seven years, and as I was no scholar, for I had forgot my letters, I was obliged to work among the negroes ; and served out my time, as in duty bound to do.

“ When my time was expired, I worked my passage home, and glad I was to see Old England again, because I loved my country. O liberty, liberty, liberty, that is the property of every Englishman, and I will die in its defence. I was afraid, however, that I should be indicted for a vagabond once more, so did not much care to go into the country, but kept about town, and did little jobs when I could get them. I was very happy in this manner for some time ; till one evening, coming home from work, two men knocked me down, and then desired me to stand still. They belonged to a press-gang ; I was carried before the Justice, and as I could give no account of myself (that was the thing that always hobbled me) I had my choice left, whether to go on board a ~~man~~-of-war, or list for a soldier. I chose to be a soldier ; and in this post of a gentleman I served two campaigns, was at the battle in

Flanders, and received but one wound through the breast, which is troublesome till this day.

" When the peace came on, I was discharged ; and as I could not work, because my wound was sometimes painful, I listed for a landman in the East India Company's service. I here fought the French in six pitched battles ; and verily believe, that if I could read or write, our captain would have given me promotion, and have made me a corporal. But that was not my good fortune. I soon fell sick, and when I became good for nothing, got leave to return home again with forty pounds in my pocket, which I saved in the service. This was at the beginning of the present war, so I hoped to be set on shore, and to have the pleasure of spending my money ; but the Government wanted men, and I was pressed again, before ever I could set foot on shore.

" The boatswain found me, as he said, an obstinate fellow : he swore that I understood my business perfectly well, but that I pretended sickness merely to be idle ; God knows, I knew nothing of sea-business ; he beat me without considering what he was about. But still my forty pounds was some comfort to me under every beating : the money was my comfort, and the money I might have had to this day ; but that our ship was taken by the French, and so I lost it all.

" Our crew was carried into a French prison, and many of them died, because they were not used to live in a gaol ; but for my part, it was nothing to me, for I was seasoned. One night, however, as I was sleeping on the bed of boards, with a warm blanket about me (for I always loved to lie well), I was awaked by the boatswain, who had a dark lantern in his hand.

" ' Jack,' says he to me, ' will you knock out the French sentry's brains ? '

" ' I don't care,' says I, striving to keep myself awake, ' if I lend a hand.'

" ' Then follow me,' says he, ' and I hope we shall do business.'

" So up I got, and tied my blanket, which was all the clothes I had, about my middle, and went with him to fight the Frenchman ; we had no arms ; but one Englishman is able to beat five French at any time ; so we went down to the door, where both the sentries were posted, and rushing upon them, seized their arms in a moment and knocked them down. From thence, nine of us ran together to the quay, and seizing the first boat we met, got out of the harbour, and out to sea ;

we had not been here three days before we were taken up by an English privateer, who was glad of so many good hands ; and we consented to run our chance. However, we had not so much luck as we expected. In three days we fell in with a French man-of-war, of forty guns, while we had but twenty-three ; so to it we went. The fight lasted for three hours, and I verily believe we should have taken the Frenchman, but, unfortunately, we lost almost all our men, just as we were going to get the victory. I was once more in the power of the French, and I believe it would have gone hard with me, had I been brought back to my old gaol in Brest ; but by good fortune, we were retaken, and carried to England once more.

“ I had almost forgot to tell you, that in this last engagement I was wounded in two places ; I lost four fingers of the left hand, and my leg was shot off. Had I the good fortune to have lost my leg and use of my hand on board a king’s ship, and not a privateer, I should have been entitled to clothing and maintenance during the rest of my life, but that was not my chance ; one man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle. However, blessed be God, I enjoy good health, and have no enemy in this world that I know of, but the French, and the Justice of Peace.”

Thus saying, he limped off, leaving us in admiration of his intrepidity and content.

ALCANDER AND SEPTIMIUS

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

ATHENS, even long after the decline of the Roman empire, still continued the seat of learning, politeness, and wisdom. The emperors and generals, who in these periods of approaching ignorance still felt a passion for science, from time to time added to its buildings, or increased its professorships. Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, was of the number: he repaired those schools which barbarity was suffering to fall into decay, and continued those pensions to men of learning which avaricious governors had monopolised to themselves.

In this city, and about this period, Alcander and Septimius were fellow-students together. The one the most subtle reasoner of all the Lyceum; the other the most eloquent speaker in the Academic Grove. Mutual admiration soon begot an acquaintance, and a similitude of disposition made them perfect friends. Their fortunes were nearly equal, their studies the same, and they were natives of the two most celebrated cities in the world; for Alcander was of Athens, Septimius came from Rome.

In this mutual harmony they lived for some time together, when Alcander, after passing the first part of his youth in the indolence of philosophy, thought at length of entering into the busy world, and as a step previous to this, placed his affections on Hypatia, a lady of exquisite beauty. Hypatia showed no dislike to his addresses. The day of their intended nuptials was fixed, the previous ceremonies were performed, and nothing now remained but her being conducted in triumph to the apartment of the intended bridegroom.

An exultation in his own happiness, or his being unable to enjoy any satisfaction without making his friend Septimius a partner, prevailed upon him to introduce his mistress to his fellow-student, which he did with all the gaiety of a man who found himself equally happy in friendship and love. But this was an interview fatal to the peace of both; for Septimius no sooner saw her but he was smit with an involuntary passion. He used every effort, but in vain, to suppress

desires at once so imprudent and unjust. He retired to his apartment in inexpressible agony ; and the emotions of his mind in a short time became so strong, that they brought on a fever, which the physicians judged incurable.

During this illness Alcander watched him with all the anxiety of fondness, and brought his mistress to join in those amiable offices of friendship. The sagacity of the physicians, by this means, soon discovered the cause of their patient's disorder ; and Alcander, being apprised of their discovery, at length extorted a confession from the reluctant dying lover.

It would but delay the narrative to describe the conflict between love and friendship in the breast of Alcander on this occasion ; it is enough to say that the Athenians were at this time arrived at such refinement in morals, that every virtue was carried to excess. In short, forgetful of his own felicity, he gave up his intended bride, in all her charms, to the young Roman. They were married privately by his connivance ; and this unlooked-for change of fortune wrought as unexpected a change in the constitution of the now happy Septimius. In a few days he was perfectly recovered, and set out with his fair partner for Rome. Here, by an exertion of those talents of which he was so eminently possessed, he in a few years arrived at the highest dignities of the state, and was constituted the city judge, or pretor.

Meanwhile Alcander not only felt the pain of being separated from his friend and mistress, but a prosecution was also commenced against him by the relations of Hypatia, for his having basely given her up, as was suggested, for money. Neither his innocence of the crime laid to his charge, nor his eloquence in his own defence, was able to withstand the influence of a powerful party. He was cast, and condemned to pay an enormous fine. Unable to raise so large a sum at the time appointed, his possessions were confiscated, himself stripped of the habit of freedom, exposed in the market-place, and sold as a slave to the highest bidder.

A merchant of Thrace becoming his purchaser, Alcander, with some other companions of distress, was carried into that region of desolation and sterility. His stated employment was to follow the herds of an imperious master ; and his skill in hunting was all that was allowed him to supply a precarious subsistence. Condemned to hopeless servitude, every morning waked him to a renewal of famine or toil, and every change of season served but to aggravate his unsheltered distress.

Nothing but death or flight was left him, and almost certain death was the consequence of his attempting to flee. After some years of bondage, however, an opportunity of escaping offered : he embraced it with ardour, and travelling by night, and lodging in caverns by day, to shorten a long story, he at last arrived in Rome. The day of Alcander's arrival Septimius sat in the forum administering justice ; and hither our wanderer came, expecting to be instantly known and publicly acknowledged. Here he stood the whole day among the crowd, watching the eyes of the judge, and expecting to be taken notice of ; but so much was he altered by a long succession of hardships, that he passed entirely without notice ; and in the evening, when he was going up to the pretor's chair, he was brutally repulsed by the attending lictors. The attention of the poor is generally driven from one ungrateful object to another ; night coming on, he now found himself under a necessity of seeking a place to lie in, and yet knew not where to apply. All emaciated and in rags as he was, none of the citizens would harbour so much wretchedness, and sleeping in the streets might be attended with interruption or danger : in short, he was obliged to take up his lodging in one of the tombs without the city, the usual retreat of guilt, poverty, or despair.

In this mansion of horror, laying his head upon an inverted urn, he forgot his miseries for a while in sleep ; and virtue found on this flinty couch more ease than down can supply to the guilty.

It was midnight when two robbers came to make this cave their retreat, but happening to disagree about the division of their plunder, one of them stabbed the other to the heart, and left him weltering in blood at the entrance. In these circumstances he was found next morning, and this naturally induced a further inquiry. The alarm was spread, the cave was examined, Alcander was found sleeping, and immediately apprehended and accused of robbery and murder. The circumstances against him were strong, and the wretchedness of his appearance confirmed suspicion. Misfortune and he were now so long acquainted, that he at last became regardless of life. He detested a world where he had found only ingratitude, falsehood, and cruelty, and was determined to make no defence. Thus, lowering with resolution, he was dragged, bound with cords, before the tribunal of Septimius. The proofs were positive against him, and he offered nothing in his own vindication ; the judge, therefore, was proceeding to doom him to a most cruel and ignominious death, when, as if illumined by a ray

from heaven, he discovered, through all his misery, the features, though dim with sorrow, of his long-lost, loved Alcander. It is impossible to describe his joy and his pain on this strange occasion ; happy in once more seeing the person he most loved on earth, distressed at finding him in such circumstances. Thus agitated by contending passions, he flew from his tribunal, and, falling on the neck of his dear benefactor, burst into an agony of distress. The attention of the multitude was soon, however, divided by another object. The robber who had been really guilty was apprehended selling his plunder, and, struck with a panic, confessed his crime. He was brought bound to the same tribunal, and acquitted every other person of any partnership in his guilt. Need the sequel be related ? Alcander was acquitted, shared the friendship and the honours of his friend Septinius, lived afterwards in happiness and ease, and left it to be engraved on his tomb, that " no circumstances are so desperate which Providence may not relieve."

MARIA EDGEWORTH

1767-1849

THE PURPLE JAR

ROSAMOND, a little girl about seven years old, was walking with her mother in the streets of London. As she passed along she looked in at the windows of several shops, and saw a great variety of different sorts of things, of which she did not know the use, or even the names. She wished to stop to look at them, but there was a great number of people in the streets, and a great many carts, carriages, and wheelbarrows, and she was afraid to let go her mother's hand.

"Oh, mother, how happy I should be," she said, as she passed a toy-shop, "if I had all these pretty things!"

"What, all! Do you wish for them all, Rosamond?"

"Yes, mamma, all."

As she spoke they came to a milliner's shop, the windows of which were decorated with ribands and lace, and festoons of artificial flowers.

"Oh, mamma, what beautiful roses! Won't you buy some of them?"

"No, my dear."

"Why?"

"Because I don't want them, my dear."

They went a little further, and came to another shop, which caught Rosamond's eye. It was a jeweller's shop, and in it were a great many pretty baubles, ranged in drawers behind glass.

"Mamma, will you buy some of these?"

"Which of them, Rosamond?"

"Which? I don't know which; any of them will do, for they are all pretty."

"Yes, they are all pretty, but of what use would they be to me?"

"Use! Oh, I am sure you could find some use or other for them if you would only buy them first."

"But I would rather find out the use first."

"Well, then, mamma, there are buckles; you know that buckles are useful things, very useful things."

"I have a pair of buckles; I don't want another pair," said her mother, and walked on.

Rosamond was very sorry that her mother wanted nothing. Presently, however, they came to a shop which appeared to her far more beautiful than the rest. It was a chemist's shop, but she did not know that.

"Oh, mother, oh!" cried she, pulling her mother's hand; "look, look! blue, green, red, yellow, and purple! Oh, mamma, what beautiful things! Won't you buy some of these?"

Still her mother answered as before, "Of what use would they be to me, Rosamond?"

"You might put flowers in them, mamma, and they would look so pretty on the chimney-piece. I wish I had one of them."

"You have a flower-pot," said her mother, "and that is not a flower-pot."

"But I would use it for a flower-pot, mamma, you know."

"Perhaps if you were to see it nearer, if you were to examine it, you might be disappointed."

"No, indeed, I'm sure I should not; I should like it exceedingly."

Rosamond kept her head turned to look at the purple vase till she could see it no longer.

"Then, mother," said she, after a pause, "perhaps you have no money."

"Yes, I have."

"Dear me, if I had money I would buy roses and boxes and buckles and purple flower-pots and everything." Rosamond was obliged to pause in the midst of her speech.

"Oh, mamma, would you stop a minute for me? I have got a stone in my shoe; it hurts me very much."

"How came there to be a stone in your shoe?"

"Because of this great hole, mamma—it comes in there; my shoes are quite worn out. I wish you would be so very good as to give me another pair."

"Nay, Rosamond, but I have not money enough to buy shoes and flower-pots and buckles and boxes and everything."

Rosamond thought that was a great pity. But now her foot, which had been hurt by the stone, began to give her so much pain that she was obliged to hop every other step, and she could think of nothing else. They came to a shoemaker's shop soon afterwards.

"There, there! Mamma, there are shoes; there are little shoes that would just fit me, and you know shoes would be really of use to me."

"Yes, so they would, Rosamond. Come in."

She followed her mother into the shop.

Mr. Sole, the shoemaker, had a great many customers, and this shop was full, so they were obliged to wait.

"Well, Rosamond," said her mother, "you don't think this shop so pretty as the rest?"

"No, not nearly; it is black and dark, and there are nothing but shoes all round; and, besides, there's a very disagreeable smell."

"That smell is the smell of new leather."

"Is it? Oh!" said Rosamond, looking round, "there is a pair of little shoes; they'll just fit me, I'm sure."

"Perhaps they might; but you cannot be sure till you have tried them on, any more than you can be quite sure that you would like the purple vase *exceedingly*, till you have examined it more attentively."

"Why, I don't know about the shoes, certainly, till I have tried, but, mamma, I am quite sure that I should like the flower-pot."

"Well, which would you rather have, a jar or a pair of shoes? I will buy either for you."

"Dear mamma, thank you—but if you could buy both?"

"No, not both."

"Then the jar, if you please."

"But I should tell you, that in that case I shall not give you another pair of shoes this month."

"This month! that's a very long time indeed! You can't think how these hurt me; I believe I'd better have the new shoes. Yet, that purple flower-pot. Oh, indeed, mamma, these shoes are not so very, very bad! I think I might wear them a little longer, and the month will soon be over. I can make them last till the end of the month, can't I? Don't you think so, mamma?"

"Nay, my dear, I want you to think for yourself; you will have time enough to consider the matter whilst I speak to Mr. Sole about my clogs."

Mr. Sole was by this time at leisure, and whilst her mother was speaking to him, Rosamond stood in profound meditation, with one shoe on and the other in her hand.

"Well, my dear, have you decided?"

"Mamma!—yes—I believe I have. If you please, I should like to have the flower-pot; that is, if you won't think me very silly, mamma."

"Why, as to that I can't promise you, Rosamond; but, when you have to judge for yourself, you should choose what would make you happy, and then it would not signify who thought you silly."

"Then, mamma, if that's all, I'm sure the flower-pot would make me happy," said she, putting on her old shoe again; "so I choose the flower-pot."

"Very well, you shall have it; clasp your shoe and come home."

Rosamond clasped her shoe and ran after her mother. It was not long before the shoe came down at the heel, and many times she was obliged to stop to take the stones out of it, and she often limped with pain! But still the thoughts of the purple flower-pot prevailed, and she persisted in her choice.

When they came to the shop with the large window, Rosamond felt much pleasure upon hearing her mother desire the servant, who was with them, to buy the purple jar and bring it home. He had other commissions, so he did not return with them. Rosamond, as soon as she got in, ran to gather all her own flowers, which she kept in a corner of her mother's garden.

"I am afraid they'll be dead before the flower-pot comes, Rosamond," said her mother to her, as she came in with the flowers in her lap.

"No, indeed, mamma, it will come home very soon, I daresay. I shall be very happy putting them into the purple flower-pot."

"I hope so, my dear."

The servant was much longer returning home than Rosamond had expected; but at length he came, and brought with him the long-wished-for jar. The moment it was set down upon the table, Rosamond ran up to it with an exclamation of joy: "I may have it now, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear, it is yours."

Rosamond poured the flowers from her lap upon the carpet and seized the purple flower-pot.

"Oh, dear, mother!" cried she, as soon as she had taken off the top, "but there's something dark in it which smells disagreeably. What is it? I didn't want this black stuff."

"Nor I, my dear."

" But what shall I do with it, mamma ? "

" That I cannot tell."

" It will be of no use to me, mamma."

" That I cannot help."

" But I must pour it out and fill the flower-pot with water."

" As you please, my dear. That was more than I promised you my dear ; but I will lend you a bowl."

The bowl was produced, and Rosamond proceeded to empty the purple vase. But she experienced much surprise and disappointment on finding, when it was entirely empty, that it was no longer a *purple* vase. It was a plain white glass jar, which had appeared to have that beautiful colour merely from the liquor with which it had been filled.

Little Rosamond burst into tears.

" Why should you cry, my dear ? " said her mother ; " it will be of as much use to you now as ever for a flower-pot."

" But it won't look so pretty on the chimney-piece. I am sure, if I had known that it was not really purple, I should not have wished to have it so much."

" But didn't I tell you that you had not examined it ; and that perhaps you would be disappointed ? "

" And so I am disappointed indeed. I wish I had believed you at once. Now I had much rather have the shoes, for I shall not be able to walk all this month ; even walking home that little way hurt me exceedingly. Mamma, I will give you the flower-pot back again, and that purple stuff and all, if only you'll give me the shoes."

" No, Rosamond ; you must abide by your own choice ; and now the best thing you can possibly do is to bear your disappointment with good humour."

" I will bear it as well as I can," said Rosamond, wiping her eyes, and she began slowly and sorrowfully to fill the vase with flowers.

But Rosamond's disappointment did not end here. Many were the difficulties and distresses into which her imprudent choice brought her before the end of the month.

Every day her shoes grew worse and worse, till at last she could neither run, dance, jump, nor walk in them.

Whenever Rosamond was called to see anything, she was detained pulling her shoes up at the heels, and was sure to be late.

Whenever her mother was going out to walk, she could not take Rosamond with her, for Rosamond had no soles to her shoes ; and at

length, on the very last day of the month, it happened that her father proposed to take her with her brother to a glass-house, which she had long wished to see. She was very happy ; but, when she was quite ready, had her hat and gloves on, and was making haste downstairs to her brother and father, who were waiting for her at the hall door, the shoe dropped off. She put it on again in a great hurry, but, as she was going across the hall, her father turned round.

" Why are you walking slip-shod ? No one must walk slip-shod with me. Why, Rosamond," said he, looking at her shoes with disgust, " I thought that you were always neat ; go, I cannot take you with me."

Rosamond coloured and retired.

" Oh, mamma," said she, as she took off her hat, " how I wish that I had chosen the shoes ! They would have been of so much more use to me than that jar ; however, I am sure, no, not quite sure, but I hope I shall be wiser another time."

THE CITY OF THE DEMONS

IN days of yore there lived in the flourishing city of Cairo a Hebrew rabbi, by name Jochonan, who was the most learned of his nation. His fame went over the East, and the most distant people sent their young men to imbibe wisdom from his lips. He was deeply skilled in the traditions of the fathers, and his word on a disputed point was decisive. He was pious, just, temperate, and strict ; but he had one vice—a love of gold had seized upon his heart, and he opened not his hand to the poor. Yet he was wealthy above most, his wisdom being to him the source of riches. The Hebrews of the city were grieved at this blemish on the wisest of their people ; but though the elders of the tribes continued to reverence him for his fame, the women and children of Cairo called him by no other name than that of Rabbi Jochonan the miser.

None knew so well as he the ceremonies necessary for initiation into the religion of Moses ; and consequently the exercise of those solemn offices was to him another source of gain. One day, as he walked in the fields about Cairo, conversing with a youth on the interpretation of the law, it so happened that the angel of death smote the young man suddenly, and he fell dead before the feet of the Rabbi, even while he was yet speaking. When the Rabbi found that the youth was dead, he rent his garments and glorified the Lord. But his heart was touched, and the thoughts of death troubled him in the visions of the night. He felt uneasy when he reflected on his hardness to the poor, and he said, " Blessed be the name of the Lord ! The first good thing that I am asked to do, in that holy name, will I perform " ; but he sighed, for he feared that some one might ask of him a portion of his gold. While yet he thought upon these things, there came a loud cry at his gate.

" Awake, thou sleeper ! " said the voice, " awake ! A child is in danger of death, and the mother hath sent me for thee, that thou mayst do thine office."

" The night is dark and gloomy," said the Rabbi, coming to his casement, " and mine age is great ; are there not younger men than I in Cairo ? "

"For thee only, Rabbi Jochonan, whom some call the wise, but whom others call Rabbi Jochonan the miser, was I sent. Here is gold," said he, taking out a purse of sequins, "I want not thy labour for nothing. I adjure thee to come, in the name of the living God."

So the Rabbi thought upon the vow he had just made, and he groaned in spirit, for the purse sounded heavy.

"As thou hast adjured me by that name, I go with thee," said he to the man, "but I hope the distance is not far. Put up thy gold."

"The place is at hand," said the stranger, who was a gallant youth in magnificent attire. "Be speedy, for time presses."

Jochonan arose, dressed himself, and accompanied the stranger, after having carefully locked up all the doors of his house, and deposited his keys in a secret place—at which the stranger smiled.

"I never remember," said the Rabbi, "so dark a night. Be thou to me as a guide, for I can hardly see the way."

"I know it well," replied the stranger with a sigh, "it is a way much frequented, and travelled hourly by many; lean upon mine arm, and fear not." They journeyed on; and though the darkness was great, yet the Rabbi could see when it occasionally brightened that he was in a place strange to him. "I thought," said he, "I knew all the country for leagues about Cairo, yet I know not where I am. I hope, young man," said he to his companion, "that thou hast not missed the way"; and his heart misgave him.

"Fear not," returned the stranger. "Your journey is even now done," and, as he spoke, the feet of the Rabbi slipped from under him, and he rolled down a great height. When he recovered, he found that his companion had fallen also, and stood by his side.

"Nay, young man," said the Rabbi, "if thus thou sportest with the grey hairs of age, thy days are numbered. Woe unto him who insults the hoary head!" The stranger made an excuse, and they journeyed on some little further in silence. The darkness grew less, and the astonished Rabbi, lifting up his eyes, found that they had come to the gates of a city which he had never before seen. Yet he knew all the cities of the land of Egypt, and he had walked but half an hour from his dwelling in Cairo. So he knew not what to think, but followed the man with trembling.

They soon entered the gates of the city, which was lighted up as if there were a festival in every house. The streets were full of revellers, and nothing but a sound of joy could be heard. But when Jochonan

looked upon their faces, they were the faces of men pained within ; and he saw, by the marks they bore, that they were Mazikin.¹ He was terrified in his soul ; and, by the light of the torches, he looked also upon the face of his companion, and, behold ! he saw upon him too the mark that showed him to be a Demon. The Rabbi feared excessively—almost to fainting ; but he thought it better to be silent, and sadly he followed his guide, who brought him to a splendid house, in the most magnificent quarter of the city.

“ Enter here,” said the Demon to Jochonan, “ for this house is mine. The lady and the child are in the upper chamber ” ; and, accordingly, the sorrowful Rabbi ascended the stair to find them.

The lady, whose dazzling beauty was shrouded by melancholy beyond hope, lay in bed ; the child, in rich raiment, slumbered on the lap of the nurse, by her side.

“ I have brought to thee, light of my eyes ! ” said the Demon, “ Rebecca, beloved of my soul ! I have brought thee Rabbi Jochonan the wise, for whom thou didst desire. Let him, then, speedily begin his office ; I shall fetch all things necessary, for he is in haste to depart.”

He smiled bitterly as he said these words, looking at the Rabbi ; and left the room, followed by the nurse.

When Jochonan and the lady were alone, she turned in the bed towards him, and said : “ Unhappy man that thou art ! knowest thou where thou hast been brought ? ”

“ I do,” said he, with a heavy groan ; “ I know that I am in a city of the Mazikin.”

“ Know then, further,” said she, and the tears gushed from eyes brighter than the diamond, “ know then, further, that no one is ever brought here unless he hath sinned before the Lord. What my sin hath been imports not to thee, and I seek not to know thine. But here thou remainest for ever—lost, even as I am lost.” And she wept again. The Rabbi dashed his turban on the ground, and tearing his hair, exclaimed, “ Woe is me ! Who art thou, woman, that speakest to me thus ? ”

“ I am a Hebrew woman,” said she, “ the daughter of a doctor of the laws, in the city of Bagdad ; and being brought hither, it matters not how, I am married to a prince among the Mazikin, even him who was sent for thee. And that child, whom thou sawest, is our first-born, and I could not bear the thought that the soul of our innocent babe

¹ Demons.

should perish. I therefore besought my husband to try to bring hither a priest, that the law of Moses (blessed be his memory!) should be done; and thy fame, which has spread to Bagdad, and lands further towards the rising of the sun, made me think of thee. Now my husband, though great among the Mazikin, is more just than the other Demons; and he loves me, whom he hath ruined, with a love of despair. So he said that the name of Jochonan the wise was familiar unto him, and that he knew thou wouldst not be able to refuse. What thou hast done, to give him power over thee, is known to thyself."

"I swear, before Heaven," said the Rabbi, "that I have ever diligently kept the law, and walked steadfastly according to the traditions of our fathers from the day of my youth upward. I have wronged no man in word or deed, and I have daily worshipped the Lord; minutely performing all the ceremonies thereto needful."

"Nay," said the lady, "all this thou mightest have done, and more, and yet be in the power of the Demons. But time passes, for I hear the foot of my husband mounting the stair. There is one chance of thine escape."

"What is that? O lady of beauty!" said the agonized Rabbi.

"Eat not, drink not, nor take fee or reward while here; and as long as thou canst do thus, the Mazikin have no power over thee, dead or alive. Have courage, and persevere."

As she ceased from speaking, her husband entered the room, followed by the nurse, who bore all things requisite for the ministration of the Rabbi. With a heavy heart he performed his duty, and the child was numbered among the faithful. But when, as usual, at the conclusion of the ceremony, the wine was handed round to be tasted by the child, the mother, and the Rabbi, he refused it, when it came to him, saying:

"Spare me, my lord, for I have made a vow that I fast this day; and I will eat not, neither will I drink."

"Be it as thou pleasest," said the Demon; "I will not that thou shouldst break thy vow": and he laughed aloud.

So the poor Rabbi was taken into a chamber looking into a garden, where he passed the remainder of the night and the day, weeping and praying to the Lord that He would deliver him from the city of Demons. But when the twelfth hour came, and the sun was set, the Prince of the Mazikin came again unto him and said:

"Eat now, I pray thee, for the day of thy vow is past"; and he set meat before him.

"Pardon again thy servant, my lord," said Jochonan, "in this thing. I have another vow for this day also. I pray thee be not angry with thy servant."

"I am not angry," said the Demon; "be it as thou pleasest, I respect thy vow": and he laughed louder than before.

So the Rabbi sat another day in his chamber by the garden, weeping and praying. And when the sun had gone behind the hills the Prince of the Mazikin again stood before him, and said:

"Eat now, for thou must be an hungered. It was a sore vow of thine"; and he offered him daintier meats.

And Jochonan felt a strong desire to eat, but he prayed inwardly to the Lord, and the temptation passed, and he answered:

"Excuse thy servant yet a third time, my lord, that I eat not. I have renewed my vow."

"Be it so then," said the other; "arise, and follow me."

The Demon took a torch in his hand, and led the Rabbi through winding passages of his palace to the door of a lofty chamber, which he opened with a key that he took from a niche in the wall. On entering the room Jochonan saw that it was of solid silver, floor, ceiling, walls, even to the threshold and the doorposts. And the curiously-carved roof and borders of the ceiling shone in the torch-light as if they were the fanciful work of frost. In the midst were heaps of silver money, piled up in immense urns of the same metal, even over the brim.

"Thou hast done me a serviceable act, Rabbi," said the Demon; "take of these what thou pleasest; aye, were it the whole."

"I cannot, my lord," said Jochonan. "I was adjured by thee to come hither in the name of God; and in that name I came, not for fee or for reward."

"Follow me," said the Prince of the Mazikin; and Jochonan did so into an inner chamber. It was of gold, as the other was of silver. Its golden roof was supported by pillars and pilasters of gold, resting upon a golden floor. The treasures of the kings of the earth would not purchase one of the four-and-twenty vessels of golden coins which were disposed in six rows along the room. No wonder! for they were filled by the constant labours of the Demons of the mine. The heart

of Jochonan was moved by avarice when he saw them shining in yellow light, like the autumnal sun, as they reflected the beams of the torch. But God enabled him to persevere.

"These are thine," said the Demon; "one of the vessels which thou beholdest would make thee richest of the sons of men—and I give thee them all."

But Jochonan refused again; and the Prince of the Mazikin opened the door of a third chamber, which was called the Hall of Diamonds. When the Rabbi entered he screamed aloud, and put his hands over his eyes, for the lustre of the jewels dazzled him, as if he had looked upon the noonday sun. In vases of agate were heaped diamonds beyond numeration, the smallest of which was larger than a pigeon's egg. On alabaster tables lay amethysts, topazes, rubies, beryls, and all other precious stones, wrought by the hands of skilful artists, beyond power of computation. The room was lighted by a carbuncle, which from the end of the hall poured its ever-living light, brighter than the rays of noontide, but cooler than the gentle radiance of the dewy moon. This was a sore trial on the Rabbi; but he was strengthened from above, and he refused again.

"Thou knowest me then, I perceive, O Jochonan, son of Ben-David," said the Prince of the Mazikin; "I am a Demon who would tempt thee to destruction. As thou hast withstood so far, I tempt thee no more. Thou hast done a service which, though I value it not, is acceptable in the sight of her whose love is dearer to me than the light of life. Sad has been that love to thee, my Rebecca! Why should I do that which would make thy cureless grief more grievous? You have yet another chamber to see," said he to Jochonan, who had closed his eyes, and was praying fervently to the Lord, beating his breast.

Far different from the other chambers, the one into which the Rabbi was next introduced was a mean and paltry apartment without furniture. On its filthy walls hung innumerable bunches of rusty keys of all sizes, disposed without order. Among them, to the astonishment of Jochonan, hung the keys of his own house, those which he had put to hide when he came on this miserable journey, and he gazed upon them intently.

"What dost thou see," said the Demon, "that makes thee look so eagerly? Can he who has refused silver, and gold, and diamonds, be moved by a paltry bunch of rusty iron?"

"They are mine own, my lord," said the Rabbi, "them will I take if they be offered me."

"Take them, then," said the Demon, putting them into his hand; "thou mayst depart. But, Rabbi, open not thy house only when thou returnest to Cairo, but thy heart also. That thou didst not open it before was that which gave me power over thee. It was well that thou didst one act of charity in coming with me without reward, for it has been thy salvation. Be no more Rabbi Jochonan the miser."

The Rabbi bowed to the ground, and blessed the Lord for his escape. "But how," said he, "am I to return, for I know not the way?"

"Close thine eyes," said the Demon. He did so, and, in the space of a moment, heard the voice of the Prince of the Mazikin ordering him to open them again. And behold, when he opened them, he stood in the centre of his own chamber, in his house at Cairo, with the keys in his hand.

When he recovered from his surprise, and had offered thanksgivings to God, he opened his house and his heart also. He gave alms to the poor, he cheered the heart of the widow, and lightened the destitution of the orphan. His hospitable board was open to the stranger, and his purse was at the service of all who needed to share it. His life was a perpetual act of benevolence, and the blessings showered upon him by all were returned bountifully upon him by the hand of God.

But people wondered, and said, "Is not this the man who was called Rabbi Jochonan the miser? What hath made the change?"

And it became a saying in Cairo. When it came to the ears of the Rabbi he called his friends together, and he avowed his former love of gold, and the danger to which it had exposed him, relating all which has been above told, in the hall of the new palace that he built by the side of the river, on the left hand, as thou goest down the course of the great stream. And wise men, who were scribes, wrote it down from his mouth, for the memory of mankind, that they might profit thereby. And a venerable man, with a beard of snow, who had read it in these books, and at whose feet I sat, that I might learn the wisdom of the old time, told it to me.

And I write it in the tongue of England, the merry and the free, on the tenth day of the month Nisan, in the year according to the lesser supputation, five hundred ninety and seven, that thou mayst learn good thereof. If not, the fault be upon thee.

WILLIAM HAMILTON MAXWELL
1792-1850

FRANK KENNEDY

MY father left the carabineers some years before the Irish rebellion of ninety-eight. Like greater warriors, the crop of laurels he collected in that celebrated corps was but a short one. It is true he had seen service : his sword, like Butler's knight's, of "passing worth," had been unsheathed in executing "warrants and exigents" ; and more than once he had stormed a private distillery, under the leading of a desperate gauger.

He was, however, a stout slashing-looking fellow, and found favour in my mother's sight. She had reached the wrong side of thirty ; consequently she made but a short resistance, and bestowed her hand and fortune on the bold dragoon. My mother was an heiress, but the estate of Killnacoppal owed "a trifle of money" : now *a trifle* in Connaught is sometimes a sweeping sum ; and you cannot safely calculate on rents in Connemara being paid exactly to the day.

I never exhibited precocity of intellect ; but before I was sixteen I discovered that our establishment occasionally suffered from a scarcity of specie. At these times my father was sure to be afflicted with cold or rheumatism, and never left the house ; and I suppose, for fear of disturbing him, the hall door was but seldom opened, and then only to a particular friend ; while an ill-favoured tradesman or suspicious-looking stranger received their commands in the briefest manner from an upper window.

What was to be done with me had cruelly puzzled both my parents : and whether I should ornament the church, or benefit the revenue, was for a long time under consideration. The law, however, held out more promising prospects than either ; and it was decided that I should be bound to an attorney.

Duncan Davidson, of Dorset Street, Dublin, was married to my father's sister. He was of Scotch descent, and like that "thinking people" from whom he sprung, he held "a hard grip of the main chance." Duncan was wealthy and childless, and if he could be induced to bring me up at his feet, God knows what might be the

consequence. My father accordingly made the application, and the gracious Duncan consented to receive me for a time *on trial*.

What a bustle there was in Killnacoppal when my uncle's letter arrived ! Due preparations were made for my departure ; and as the term of my absence was computed at seven years, I had to take a formal and affectionate leave of my relatives to the fifteenth degree of consanguinity. My aunt Macan, whose cat's leg I had unfortunately dislocated, and who had not spoken to me since Candlemas, was induced to relent on the occasion, and favoured me with her blessing and a one-pound note, although she had often declared she never could banish the idea from her mind but that I should travel at the public expense, if my career were not finished in a more summary manner.

I arrived safely in Dublin—and awful were my feelings when first ushered into the presence of my uncle Duncan. He was a short fat man, in a brown coat and flax-coloured scratch-wig, perched upon a high office stool. Considering his dimensions, I used to marvel much how he managed to get there. Holding out his forefinger, which I dutifully grasped, he told me to be steady and attentive, and that my aunt would be happy to see me upstairs. On leaving the room, I heard him softly remark to the head clerk, that he did not much like my appearance, for that I had “ a wild eye in my head.”

I was duly put to the desk, and the course of trial was not flattering to me, or satisfactory to my intended master. It was allowed on all hands that my writing was abominable ; and my spelling, being untrammelled by rules, was found in many material points to differ from modern orthographers. Nor was I more successful in comparing deeds—my desk and stool were unluckily placed beside a window which looked into a narrow court, and a straw-bonnet maker occupied the opposite apartment. She was pretty, and I was naturally polite—and who with a rosy cheek before him would waste a look upon a tawny skin of parchment ? I mentally consigned the *deed* to the devil, and let the copy loose upon the world “ with all *its* imperfections on its head.”

The first trial was nearly conclusive—for never before had such a lame and lamentable document issued from the office of the punctilious Duncan. I had there omitted setting forth “ one hundred dove-cots,” and, for ought I know, left out “ one hundred castles,” to keep them company. My uncle almost dropped from his perch at the discovery ;

and Counsellor Roundabout was heard to remark that a man's life was not safe in the hands of such a delinquent. I was on the point of getting my *congé*, and free permission to return to the place from whence I came ; but my aunt—good easy woman—interfered, and Duncan consented to give me a farther trial, and employ me to transport his bag to the courts and his briefs to the lawyer.

Any drudgery for me but the desk. With suitable instructions the bag was confided to me, and for three days it came back safely. On the fourth evening I was returning ; the bag was unusually full, and so had been my uncle's admonitions for its security. I had got half-way down Capel Street, when whom should I see on the other side of the way but Slasher Mac Tighe ?

The Slasher was five akin to my mother, and allowed to be the greatest buck at the last fair of Ballinasloe—and would he acknowledge me, loaded as I was like a Jew clothesman ? What was to be done ? I slipped the accursed bag to a ragged boy—promised him some halfpence for his trouble—prudently assured him that his cargo was invaluable—told him to wait for me at the corner, and next moment was across the street, with a fast hold of the Slasher's right hand.

The Slasher—peace to his ashes ! for he was shot *stone dead* in the Phoenix Park—we never well understood the quarrel in Connemara, and it was said there that the poor man himself was not thoroughly informed on the subject—appeared determined to support his justly-acquired reputation at the late fair of Ballinasloe. Not an eye in Capel Street but was turned on him as he swaggered past. His jockey boots—I must begin below—were in the newest style ; the top sprang from the ankle-bone, and was met midleg by short tights of tea-coloured leather ; three smoothing-iron seals and a chain that would manacle a deserter dangled from the fob ; his vest was of amber kerseymere, gracefully sprinkled with stars and shamrocks ; his coat sky-blue, with basket buttons, relieved judiciously with a purple neckcloth, and doeskin gloves ; while a conical hat with a leaf full seven inches broad topped all. A feeble imitation of the latter article may still be seen by the curious, in a hatter's window, No. 71 in the Strand, with a label affixed thereto, denominating it "*Neck or Nothing.*"

Lord, how proud I felt when the Slasher tucked me under his arm ! We had already taken two turns—the admiration of a crowded thoroughfare—when I looked round for my bag-holder ; but he was not visible. I left my kinsman hastily, ran up and down the street, looked

round the corners, peered into all the public-houses ; but neither bag nor boy was there. I recollected my uncle's name and address were written on it, and the urchin might have mistaken his instructions and carried the bag home. Off I ran, tumbled an apple basket in Bolton Street, and spite of threats and curses, held on my desperate course, until I found myself, breathless, in my uncle's presence.

He sternly reproached me for being dilatory.

"What had detained me? Here had been Counsellor Leatherhead's servant waiting this half-hour for his papers ;—bring in the bag." I gaped at him, and stuttered that I supposed it had been already here ; but it would certainly arrive shortly. Question and answer followed rapidly, and the fatal truth came out—*the bag was lost* !—for the cad, advertised of the value of his charge, had retreated the moment I turned my back ; and although on investigation he must have felt much disappointed at the result of his industry, yet, to do him justice, he lost no time in transferring the papers to the tobacconist and pocketing the produce of the same.

For some moments Duncan's rage prevented him from speaking. At last he found utterance ;—"Heaven and earth !" he exclaimed ; "was there ever such a villain? He was ruined :—all the Kilgobbin title-deeds—Lady Splashboard's draft of separation—papers of satisfaction for sixteen mortgages of Sir Phelim O'Boyl !—What was to be done?"

I muttered that I supposed I should be obliged to give Sir Phelim satisfaction myself.

"O! curse your satisfaction," said my uncle ; "these are your Connaught notions, you desperate do-no-good. What an infernal business to let any one from that barbarous country into my house ! Never had but two clients in my life on the other side of the Shannon. I divorced a wife for one ; and he died insolvent the very day the decree was pronounced, and costs and money advanced went along with him to the devil. The other quarrelled with me for not taking a bad bill for my demand, and giving a large balance over my claim, in ready cash. I threatened law, and he threatened flagellation. I took courage and sent down a writ ; and the sheriff returned a *non est inventus*, although he was hunting with him for a fortnight. I ran him to execution and got *nulla bona* on my return. As a last resource I sent a man specially from Dublin : they tossed him in a blanket, and forced him to eat *the original* ; and he came back, half dead, with a

civil intimation that if I ever crossed the bridge of Athlone, the defendant would drive as many slugs through my body as there were hoops on a wine-pipe ! ”

I could not help smiling at the simile : the client was a wag ; for my uncle in his personal proportions bore a striking resemblance to a quarter-cask.

“ But run, every soul of you,” he continued, “ and try to get some clue by which we may trace the papers.”

Away clerk and apprentice started ; but their researches were unsuccessful ; many a delicate cut of cheese was already encased in my Lady Splashboard’s separation bill ; and the Kilgobbin title-deeds had issued in subdivisions from the snuff-shop, and were making a rapid circle of the metropolis.

My aunt’s influence was not sufficient to obtain my pardon, and mollify the attorney ; and I was despatched, per mail, to that *refugium peccatorum*, as Duncan styled Connemara.

The gentle auditor may anticipate that on my return no fatted calf was killed ; nor was there “ joy in Aztlan,” as the poet-laureate has it. I re-entered Killnacoppal without beat of drum—and indeed my demeanour on this occasion was so modest that I had been in undisturbed possession of the front attic for two whole days before my worthy parents were advertised that I had retired from the study of the law, with no future intention to “ stick to the woolsack.”

To communicate the abrupt termination of my forensic pursuits to my aunt Macan was an affair of nice and delicate management. When acquainted with the unhappy incident which had drawn down the wrath of my uncle Duncan, she particularly inquired “ if there had been any money in the lost bag,” and requested to see the last “ Hue and Cry.”

God knows whether I should have been enabled to weather the gale of family displeasure, as my aunt had again resumed the mantle of prophecy, when, luckily for me, the representation of the county of Galway became vacant by the sudden decease of Sir Barnabas Bodkin ; the honest gentleman being smothered in a hackney-coach returning *comfortable* from a corporation dinner at Morrison’s.

On this distressing event being known, Mr. Denis Darcey, of Carrigahowley Castle, *declared himself*. He was strongly supported by Mr. Richard Martin, the other member ; and his address, from the pen of the latter gentleman, was circulated without delay. In it he set forth

his family and pretensions: pledged himself to support Catholic emancipation and the repeal of still fines;—humanely recommended his opponent to provide himself with a coffin previous to the opening of the poll;—professed strong attachment to the House of Brunswick, and the Church by law established; and promised to use his utmost exertions to purify the penal code, by making accidents in duelling amount to justifiable homicide: and abduction of heiresses and dogs, felony without benefit of clergy.

A person of Denis Darcey's constitutional principles was a man after my father's own heart: the Killnacoppal interest was accordingly given him, and I was despatched at the head of sixscore freeholders, "good men and true," untrammelled with tight shoes or tender consciences, to give our "most sweet voices," in the ancient town of Galway.

But I was not entrusted with this important command without receiving full instructions for my conduct on the occasion. My father, no doubt, would have led the Killnacoppal legion to the hustings in person, had it not happened that the sheriff was on the other side; and, therefore, his public appearance within the bailiwick of that redoubted personage would have been a dangerous experiment. "Frank," said my father, "don't overdo the thing: poll your men *twice*! and more cannot be expected; but mind the *outwork*, for it's there the *tinints* will shine."

I obeyed him to the letter; and without personal vanity, I ascribe the happy return of my esteemed friend Denis Darcey to the unwearied exertions of the freeholders of Killnacoppal. What between pelting the military, smashing the booths, and scattering the tallies, we managed to keep up such confusion that our adversaries could hardly bring forward a man. If dispersed by a charge of cavalry here, we were rallied in a few minutes in the next street, cracking heads and crashing windows: if routed by the Riot Act and a row of bayonets, before the sheriff was well round the corner we had a house pulled down to the tune of "Hurrah for Killnacoppal!"

At last, all human means being found unavailable by our opponents to bring in a freeholder, the booths were closed, and Mr. Denis Darcey declared duly elected.

After such feats, how could it be wondered at that I was

courted and caressed,
High placed in halls a welcome guest;

seated within seven of the chairman at the election dinner, drank wine with the new member, toasted by the old one, I mean Dick Martin—and embraced by Blakes, Brownes, and Bodkins in endless variety?—Nor did the reward of “high desert” end here; for in the next gazette I was appointed to a lieutenancy in the South Mayo militia.

With very different feelings I now returned to my paternal mansion—I, who had left the little lawyer in Dorset Street in disgrace, and been happy to effect a sort of felonious re-entry of the premises at Killnacoppal—I now came home a conqueror; an hundred blackthorns rattled above my head; an hundred voices yelled “*Kinnidy* for ivir!”—a keg of potcen was broached before the door; a stack of turf was blazing in the village; and all was triumph and exultation. We had brought back, of course, the usual assortment of broken bones, left some half-score damaged skulls to be repaired at the expense of the county, and carried back one gentleman totally defunct, who had been suffocated by tumbling dead drunk into a bog-hole. My fame had travelled before me, and my aunt Macan had taken to her bed not from vanity, but “vexation of spirit.”

My leave of absence expired, and I set out to join my regiment. My mother consulted the Army List, and discovered she had divers relatives in my corps; for there was scarcely a family from Loughrea to Belmullet with whom she was not in some way connected. Some of her relations in the South Mayo she mentioned as being rather remote; but there was Captain Rattigan: his father, Luke Rattigan of Rawnacreeva, married Peter Fogarty’s third daughter; and Peter Fogarty and my aunt Macan were cousins-german.

No doubt the gallant captain would know and acknowledge the relationship, and take that lively interest in my welfare which was natural; but, for fear of mistakes, she wrote a letter of introduction with me, having very fortunately danced fifteen years before with the said Mr. Rattigan, at a fair ball at Ballinasloe.

For the second time I left my father’s house. The headquarters of the regiment were in Naas, and there I arrived in safety; was recognized by Captain Rattigan; presented by him in due form to the colonel; introduced to the corps; paid plate and band-fund fees; dined at the mess; got drunk there as became a soldier of promise, and was carried home to my inn by a file of the guard, after having overheard the fat major remark to my kinsman—

“Rat, that boy of yours will be a credit to the regiment; for as

I'm a true Catholic, he has taken off three bottles of Page's port, and no doubt he'll improve."

A year passed over—I conducted myself creditably in all regimental matters, touching drill duty and drinking, when an order suddenly came for a detachment to march to Ballybunnion ; in the neighbourhood of which town the pleasant part of the population were amusing themselves nightly in carding middlemen, and feathering tithe proctors. Captain Rattigan's company (in which I was an unworthy lieutenant) was selected for this important service.

The morning I left Naas for Ballybunnion will be a memorable day in the calendar of my life. My cousin Rattigan frequently boasted, after dinner, that " he was under fifty, and above five feet three " ; but there were persons in the corps who alleged that he was above the former and under the latter :—but let that pass—he is now, honest man, quietly resting in Craughane churchyard, with half a ton weight of Connemara marble over him, on which his virtues and his years are recorded.

Now, without stopping to ascertain minutely the age and height of the departed, I shall describe him as a thick square-shouldered undersized man, having a short neck and snub-nose—the latter organ fully attesting that Page's port was a sound and well-bodied liquor. The captain, on his pied pony, rode gallantly on at the head of " his charge " : I modestly followed on foot—and late in the evening we marched in full array down the main street of Ballybunnion, our fife and drum playing to the best of their ability the captain's favourite quick step, "*I'm over young to marry yet.*"

My kinsman and I were peaceably settled over our wine, when the waiter announced that a gentleman had called upon us. He was shown up in proper form ; and having managed by depressing his person, which was fully six feet four inches, to enter the apartment he announced himself as Mr. Christopher Clinch ; and in a handsome speech declared himself to be an ambassador from the stewards of the Ballybunnion coterie ; which coterie being to be holden that evening, he was deputed to solicit the honour of our company on this occasion. Captain Rattigan returned our acknowledgments duly ; and he and the ambassador having discussed a cooper of port within a marvellous short period, separated with many squeezes of the hand, and ardent hopes of a future acquaintance.

There was a subject my kinsman invariably dwelt upon whenever

he had transgressed the third bottle—it was a bitter lamentation over the numerous opportunities he had suffered to escape of making himself comfortable for life, by matrimony. As we dressed together, for we were cantoned in a double-bedded room, Rat was unusually eloquent on the grand mistake of his earlier days, and declared his determination of even yet endeavouring to amend his youthful error, and retrieve lost time.

The commander's advice was not lost upon me. I took unusual pains in arraying myself for conquest, and in good time found myself in the ballroom, with thirty couples on the floor all dancing "for the bare life" that admired tune of "*Blue bonnets over the border*."

The attention evinced in his visit to the inn by Mr. Christopher Clinch was not confined to a formal invitation; for he assured us on our arrival that two ladies had been expressly kept disengaged for us. Captain Rattigan declined dancing, alleging that exercise flurried him, and he could not abide a red face, it looked so very like dissipation. I, whose countenance was fortunately not so inflammable as my kinsman's, was marshalled by Mr. Clinch to the head of the room.

"He was going," he said, "to introduce me to Miss Jemima O'Brien—lady of first connections—large fortune when some persons at present in possession dropped off—fine woman—much followed—sprightly—off-handed—fond of military men. Miss O'Brien, Captain Kennedy." I bowed—she ducked—seized my offered hand, and in a few minutes we were going down the middle like two-year-olds for "the Kirwans." Nor had Captain Rattigan been neglected by the master of the ceremonies: he was snugly seated in a quiet corner at cribbage, a game the commander delighted in, with an elderly gentlewoman, whom my partner informed me was her aunt.

Miss O'Brien was what Rattigan called a *spanker*. She was dressed in a blue silk lute-string gown, with a plume of ostrich feathers, flesh-coloured stockings, and red satin shoes. She had the usual assortment of beads and curls, with an ivory fan and a well-scented handkerchief.

She was evidently a fine-tempered girl; for, observing my eye rest on an immense stain upon her blue lute-string, she remarked with a smile "that her aunt's footman had spilled some coffee on her dress, and to save him from a scolding, she had assured the dear old lady that the injury was trifling, and that it would be quite unnecessary to detain her while she should change her gown: it was quite clear she never could wear it again; but her maid and the milliner would be

the gainers. Amiable creature!—the accident did not annoy her for a second.

The first dance had concluded, when the long gentleman whispered softly over my shoulder how I liked "the heiress"? *The heiress!*—I felt a faint hope rising in my breast which made my cheek colour like a peony. Rattigan's remorse for neglected opportunities rushed to my mind. Had my lucky hour come? And had I actually an heiress by the hand for nine-and-twenty couples? We were again at the head of the room, and away we went—she cutting and I capering, until we danced to the very bottom, "*The wind that shakes the barley!*"

I had placed Miss O'Brien with great formality on a bench, when Rattigan took me aside:—"Frank, you're a fortunate fellow, or it's your own fault—found out all from the old one—lovely creature—great catch—who knows?—strike while the iron is hot," etc., etc., etc.

Fortune indeed appeared to smile upon me. By some propitious accident all the men had been provided with partners, and I had *the heiress* to myself. "She was, she confessed, romantic—she had quite a literary turn; spoke of Lady Morgan's *Wild Irish Girl*; she loved it—doted upon it;—and why should she not? for Lieutenant-colonel Cassidy had repeatedly sworn that Glorvina was written for herself";—and she raised her fan

The conscious blush to hide.

Walter Scott succeeded—I had read in the *Galway Advertiser* a quotation from that poet, which the newspaper had put in the mouth of a travelling priest, and alleged to have been spoken by him in a charity sermon, which I now fortunately recollected and repeated. Miss O'Brien responded directly with that inflammatory passage,—

In peace love tunes the shepherd's reed.

"And could she love?"—I whispered with a look of tender inquietude. "She could; she had a heart, she feared, too warm for her happiness: she was a creature of imagination—all soul—all sympathy. She could wander with the man of her heart from

Egypt's fires to Zembla's frost."

There was no standing this. I mustered all my resolution—poured out an unintelligible rhapsody—eternal love—life gratefully devoted—permission to fall at her feet—hand—heart—fortune!

She sighed deeply—kept her fan to her face for some moments—and, in a voice of peculiar softness, murmured something about “short acquaintance,” with a gentle supplication to be allowed time for ten minutes to consult her heart. Rat again rushed to my mind; procrastination had ruined him; I was obdurate—pressed—raved—ranted—till she sighed, in a timid whisper, that she was mine for ever!

Heavens!—was I awake?—did my ears deceive me? The room turned topsy-turvy—the candles danced a reel—my brain grew giddy—it *was true—absolutely true*; *Jemima O'Brien* had consented to become *Mrs. Kennedy*!

Up came Captain Rattigan, as my partner left me for an instant to speak to her aunt. Rat was thunderstruck—cursed his fate, and complimented mine.

“But, zounds! Frank, you must stick to her. Would she run away with you? These d—— lawyers will be tying up the property, so that you cannot touch a guinea but the half-year’s rent—may be inquiring about settlements, and ripping up the cursed mortgages of Killnacoppal. At her, man,—they are all on the move. I’ll manage the old one: mighty lucky, by-the-by, at cribbage. Try and get the heiress to be off—to-morrow, if possible—early hour. Oh! murder—how I lost my time!”

All was done as the commander directed. Rat kept the aunt in play while I pressed the heiress hard—and so desperately did I portray my misery, that, to save my life, she humanely consented to elope with me at twelve o’clock next day.

Rattigan was enraptured. What a chance for a poor lieutenant—as he shrewdly observed, from the very unpretending appearance of Mrs. Cogan’s mansion, that “my aunt’s” purse must be a long one. We settled ourselves joyfully at the inn fire—ordered two bottles of mulled port—arranged all for the elopement—clubbed purses—sum total not burdensome—and went to bed drunk and happy.

Next morning—the morning of that day which was to bless me with fortune and a wife, Captain Rattigan and I were sitting at an early breakfast, when, who should unexpectedly arrive but Cornet Bircham, who was in command of a small party of dragoons in Ballybunnion, and an old acquaintance of my kinsman. “How lucky!” whispered Rat; “he has been quartered here for three months, and we shall hear the particulars of the O’Briens from him.”

While he spoke the trooper entered. "Ah! Ratty, old boy, how wags the world? — Just heard you had been sent here to exterminate carders — cursed scoundrels! — obliged me to leave a delightful party at Lord Tara's; but, Rat, we'll make them smoke for it."

"Mr. Bircham, my cousin Kennedy. Come, Cornet, off with the scimitar and attack the congo. Any news stirring?"

"Nothing but a flying report that you had determined on sobriety and forsworn a drop beyond the third bottle;—but that shake in your claw gives a lie direct to the tale. And you were dancing, Rat, last night. How did the carnival or coterie go off? Any wigs lost or gowns tattered? Any catastrophe?"

"Why, no—pleasant thing enough—some fine women there."

"Were there, faith? Why, Rat, you're a discoverer; for such a crew as figured at the last one, mortal eye never looked upon."

"I only particularly noticed one—by Jove, a fine woman!—a Miss O'Brien."

"Miss *Jemmy* O'Brien, as the men call her. Why, Rat, what iniquity of yours has delivered you into the hands of the most detestable harpy that ever infested country quarters?"

"Detestable harpy!"—Rat and I looked cursedly foolish. "Bircham—hem!—are you sure you know the lady?"

"Know the lady! to be sure I do. Why, she did me out of an ivory fan one unlucky wet day that the devil tempted me to enter Mrs. Cogan's den. Phoo! I'll give you what the beadle calls 'marks and tokens.' Let me see.—Yes—I have it—blue dress, cursedly splashed with beer—she says coffee; soiled feathers, and tricked out like a travelling actress."

I groaned audibly—it was Jemima to a T:—Captain Rattigan looked queer.

"My dear Bircham—hem!—you know among military men—hem!—honourable confidence may be reposed—hem! My young friend here danced with her—represented as an heiress to him——"

"By a cursed hag who cheats at cribbage, and carries off negus by the quart."

"True bill, by ——!" ejaculated the Captain. "Complained eternally of thirst and the heat of the room, and did me regularly out of thirty shillings."

"Ha! ha! ha!—Rat, Rat, and wert thou so soft, my old one?"

"But, Birchy," said the Captain, "the devil of it is, my young friend—little too much wine—thought himself in honourable hands, and promised her——"

"A new silk gown—ah, my young friend, little didst thou know the Jezebel. But it was a promise obtained under false pretences—she told you a cock-and-bull story about Lady Morgan—sporting Scott—dealt out Tom Moore by the yard—all false pretences. See her damned before I would buy her a yard of riband. What a pirate the woman is!"

Rat jumped off his chair, drew his breath in, and gulped out—"A gown! Zounds, man, he promised to marry her!"

Up jumped Bircham—"To marry her! Are you mad, or are you hoaxing?"

"Serious, by St. Patrick," said Rat.

"Why then it's no longer a joke. You are in a nice scrape. I beg to tell you that Jemmy O'Brien is as notorious as Captain Rock. She has laid several fools under contribution, and has just returned from Dublin, after taking an action against a little drunken one-eyed Welsh major, whom her aunt got, when intoxicated, to sign some paper or promise of marriage. The major, like a true gentleman, retrieved his error by suspending himself in his lodgings the day before the trial; and it is likely that *Jem* and her aunt will be in gaol, for the law expenses."

Rat and I were overwhelmed, and looked for some minutes in silence at each other. At last I told Bircham the whole affair. The dragoon was convulsed with laughter—"So," said he, "at twelve o'clock the gentle *Jemmy* is to be spirited away. But come, there's no time to lose—sit down, Rat, get a pen in thy fist, and I'll dictate and thou inscribe."

"MADAM—Having unfortunately, at the request of his afflicted family, undertaken the case of Lieutenant Kennedy of the South Mayo regiment, I beg to apprise you that the unhappy gentleman is subject to occasional fits of insanity. Fearing from his mental malady that he may have misconducted himself to your amiable niece last night at the coterie, I beg on the part of my poor friend (who is tolerably collected this morning) to say that he is heartily sorry for what has occurred, and requests the lady will consider anything he might have

said only as the wanderings of a confirmed lunatic!—I am, Madam, etc., your obedient servant,

“TERENCE RATTIGAN, Capt. S— M— Militia.

“To Mrs. Cogan, etc.”

How very flattering this apology was to me I submit to the indulgent auditor. I was indubitably proven to have been an ass overnight, and I must pass as a lunatic in the morning. We had barely time to speculate on the success of Bircham's curious epistle, when my aunt Cogan's answer arrived with due promptitude. The Cornet separated the wet wafer with a “Faugh!” and holding the billet at arm's length, as if it exhibited a plague-spot, he favoured us with the contents, which were literally as follows :

“CAPTIN RATIGIN.

“SIR—I have red your paltrey appollogey for your nephew's breech of promis. I beg to tell you that a lady of the family of Clinch will not submit to be ensulted with impunnitey. My neece is packed and reddy ; and if your friend does not appear according to apointment, he will shortly here as will not plase him, from yours to command,

“HONOR COGAN, otherwise CLINCH.

“Hawthorn Cotage, Friday morning.”

Twelve o'clock passed—and we waited the result of Mrs. Cogan's threats, when the waiter showed up a visitor, and Mr. Christopher Clinch, the prime cause of all our misfortunes, presented himself. He persisted in standing, or more properly stooping—for the ceiling was not quite six feet from the floor—coughed—hoped his interference might adjust the mistake, as he presumed it must be on the part of Lieutenant Kennedy, and begged to inform him that Miss Jemima O'Brien was ready to accompany the said Mr. Kennedy, as last night arranged. Captain Rattigan took the liberty to remark that he, the captain, had been very explicit with Mrs. Cogan, and requested to refer to his letter, in which Mr. Kennedy's sentiments were fully conveyed, and, on his part, to decline the very flattering proposal of Miss Jemima O'Brien.

Mr. Clinch stated that an immediate change of sentiment on the part of Mr. Kennedy was imperative, or that Mr. K. would be expected to favour him, Mr. C., with an interview in the Priest's Meadow. Captain Rattigan acknowledged the request of Mr. Clinch to be a very reasonable alternative, and covenanted that Mr. Kennedy should

appear at the time and place mentioned ; and Mr. Clinch was then very ceremoniously conducted downstairs by the polite commander.

Through motives of delicacy, I had at the commencement of the interview retired to the next apartment ; and as the rooms were only separated by a boarded partition, I overheard through a convenient chink, with desperate alarm, Captain Rattigan giving every facility to my being shot at in half an hour in the Priest's Meadow. No wonder then Rat found me pale as a spectre, when bursting into the room he seized me by the hand, and told me he had brought this unlucky business to a happy termination. He, the captain, dreaded that Jemima would have been looking for legal redress ; but, thank God, it would only end in a duel.

I hinted at the chance of my being shot.

" Shot ! " exclaimed my comforter, " why, what the deuce does that signify ? If indeed you had been under the necessity of hanging yourself, like the one-eyed major, it would have been a hardship. No funeral honours—no decent wake—but smuggled into the earth like a half-bale of contraband tobacco ;—but, in your case, certain of respectable treatment—reversed arms—dead march—and Christian burial :—vow to God, quite a comfort to be shot under such flattering circumstances ! Frank, you have all the luck of the Rattigans about you ! "—and, opening the door, he hallooed—" Myke—Myke Boyle, bring down *the pace-makers* to the parlour."

In a few seconds I heard the captain and his man busily at work, and by a number of villainous clicks, which jarred through my system like electricity, I found these worthies were arranging the commander's *pace-makers* for my use in the Priest's Meadow.

At the appointed hour I reached the ground, which was but a short distance from the inn. Rattigan and Bircham accompanied me, and Myke Boyle followed with *the tools*. Mr. Christopher Clinch and his friends were waiting for us ; and a cadaverous-looking being was peeping through the hedge, whom I afterwards discovered to be the village apothecary, allured thither by the hope of an accident, as birds of prey are said to be collected by a chance of carrion.

The customary bows were formally interchanged between the respective belligerents—the ground correctly measured—pistols squibbed, loaded, and delivered to the principals. I felt very queer on finding myself opposite a truculent fellow of enormous height, with a pair of projecting whiskers upon which a man might hang his

hat, and a pistol two feet long clutched in his bony grasp. Rattigan, as he adjusted my weapon, whispered, "Frank, jewel, remember the hip-bone; or, as the fellow's a — of a length, you may level a trifle higher"; and, stepping aside, his coadjutor pronounced in an audible voice—"One !—two !!—*three !!!* "

Off went the pistols. I felt Mr. Clinch's bullet whistle past my ear, and saw Captain Rattigan next moment run up to my antagonist and inquire "if he was much hurt." Heavens!—how delightful! I had brought the engagement to a glorious issue by neatly removing Mr. Clinch's trigger-finger, and thereby spoiling his shooting for life.

With a few parting bows we retired from the Priest's Meadow, leaving Christopher Clinch a job for the vampire apothecary, and a fit subject for the assiduities of Mrs. Cogan and the gentle Jemima.

If Captain Rattigan had registered a rash vow against port wine, it is to be lamented, for never were three gentlemen of the sword more completely done up at an early hour of the evening than we.

Next day we were informed that Clinch was tolerably well, and that their attorney had been closeted with the ladies of Hawthorn Cottage. We held a council of war, and while debating on the expediency of my retiring on leave to Connemara, where I might set *Jemmy* and her lawyer at defiance, the post brought us intelligence that "a turn-out for the line was wanted"; and if I could muster the necessary number, I should be exchanged into a regular regiment.

Off Rat and I started for Naas, and with little difficulty succeeded in making up the quota; and the first intimation the prototype of Glorvina received of our movements was being seduced to the window by the drums, as I marched past Hawthorn Cottage, with as choice a sample of "food for gunpowder" as ever left Ballybunnion. I saluted the once-intended Mrs. Kennedy with great respect; the fifers struck up "*Fare you well, Killeavey*"; and Captain Rattigan, who accompanied me the first day's march, ejaculated, as he looked askance at this second Ariadne, "May the devil smother you, Jemima O'Brien!"

I have a mighty affection for the army, and, therefore, I supplicate young soldiers never to propose for a lady in a public ballroom the first night they arrive in country quarters, and to shun, as they would the *chorea viti*, that seductive tune, called "*The wind that shakes the barley*!"—and, finally, to give no credence whatever to any apology offered for a soiled silk unless they have perpetrated the offence in person, or have seen it committed in their own actual presence.

SAMUEL LOVER

1797-1868

THE GRIDIRON

A CERTAIN old gentleman in the west of Ireland, whose love of the ridiculous quite equalled his taste for claret and fox-hunting, was wont, upon certain festive occasions when opportunity offered, to amuse his friends by drawing out one of his servants who was exceedingly fond of what he termed his "thravels," and in whom a good deal of whim, some queer stories, and, perhaps more than all, long and faithful services, had established a right of loquacity.

He was one of those few trusty and privileged domestics, who, if his master unheedingly uttered a rash thing in a fit of passion, would venture to set him right.

If the squire said, "I'll turn that rascal off," my friend Pat would say, "throth you won't, sir"; and Pat was always right, for if any altercation arose upon the subject-matter in hand, he was sure to throw in some good reason, either from former service—general good conduct—or the delinquent's "wife and childher," that always turned the scale.

But I am digressing. On such merry meetings as I have alluded to, the master, after making certain "approaches," as a military man would say, as the preparatory steps in laying siege to some extravaganza of his servant, might, perchance, assail Pat thus:

"By the by, Sir John" (addressing a distinguished guest), "Pat has a very curious story, which something you told me to-day reminds me of. You remember, Pat" (turning to the man, evidently pleased at the notice paid to himself)—"you remember that queer adventure you had in France?"

"Throth I do, sir," grins forth Pat.

"What!" exclaims Sir John, in feigned surprise. "Was Pat ever in France?"

"Indeed he was," cries mine host; and Pat adds, "Ay, and farther, plase your honour."

"I assure you, Sir John," continues mine host, "Pat told me a

story once that surprised me very much, respecting the ignorance of the French."

"Indeed!" rejoins the baronet. "Really, I always supposed the French to be a most accomplished people."

"Throth, then, they're not, sir," interrupts Pat.

"Oh, by no means," adds mine host, shaking his head emphatically.

"I believe, Pat, 'twas when you were crossing the Atlantic?" says the master, turning to Pat with a seductive air, and leading into the "full and true account"—(for Pat had thought fit to visit North Amerikay, for "a raison he had," in the autumn of the year ninety-eight).

"Yes, sir," says Pat, "the broad Atlantic," a favourite phrase of his, which he gave with a brogue as broad almost as the Atlantic itself.

"It was the time I was lost in crassin' the broad Atlantic, comin' home," began Pat, decoyed into the recital; "whin the winds began to blow, and the sae to rowl, that you'd think the *Colleen Dhas* (that was her name) would not have a mast left.

"Well, sure enough, the masts went by the board at last, and the pumps was choaked (divil choak them for that same), and av coorse the wather gained an us, and throth, to be filled with water is neither good for man or baste; and she was sinkin' fast, settlin' down, as the sailors calls it, and faith I never was good at settlin' down in my life, and I liked it then less nor ever. Accordingly we prepared for the worst, and put out the boat, and got a sack o' bishkits, and a cashk o' pork, and a kag o' wather, and a thrifle o' rum aboard, and any other little mathers we could think iv in the mortial hurry we wor in—and, faith, there was no time to be lost, for my darlint, the *Colleen Dhas*, went down like a lump o' lead, afore we wor many sthrokes o' the oar away from her.

"Well, we dhrifted away all that night, and next mornin' we put up a blanket an the ind av a pole as well as we could, and thin we sailed illigant, for we dar'n't show a stitch o' canvas the night before, bekase it was blowin' like murther, savin' your presence, and sure it's the wondher of the world we worn't swallyed alive by the ragin' sae.

"Well, away we wint for more nor a week, and nothin' before our two good-looking eyes but the canophy iv heaven, and the wide ocean—the broad Atlantic—not a thing was to be seen but the sae and the sky: and though the sae and the sky is mighty purty things in them-

selves, throth they're no great things whin you've nothin' else to look at for a week together—and the barest rock in the world, so it was land, would be more welkim.

"And then, sure enough, throth, our provisions began to run low, the bishkits, and the wather, and the rum—throth that was gone first of all—God help uz!—and oh! it was thin that starvation began to stare us in the face. 'Oh, murther, murther, captain, darlint,' says I, 'I wish we could see land anywhere,' says I.

" 'More power to your elbow, Paddy, my boy,' says he, 'for sitch a good wish, and, throth, it's myself wishes the same.'

" 'Oh,' says I, 'that it may plaze you, sweet queen in heaven—supposing it was only a dissolute island,' says I, 'inhabited wid Turks, sure they wouldn't be such bad Chrissthans as to refuse uz a bit and a sup.'

" 'Whisht, whisht, Paddy,' says the captain; 'don't be talkin' bad of any one,' says he; 'you don't know how soon you may want a good word put in for yourself, if you should be called to quarters in th' other world all of a suddent,' says he.

" 'Thru for you, captain, darlint,' says I—I called him darlint, and made free wid him, you see, bekase disthress makes uz all equal—'thru for you, captain, jewel—God betune uz and harm, I owe no man any spite'—and, throth, that was only thruth.

"Well, the last bishkit was sarved out, and, by gor, the wather itself was all gone at last, and we passed the night mighty cowlid. Well, at the brake o' day the sun riz most beautiful out o' the waves, that was as bright as silver and as clear as cryshthal.

"But it was only the more crule upon uz, for we wor beginnin' to feel terrible hungry; when all at wanst I thought I spied the land—by gor, I thought I felt my heart up in my throat in a minnit, and 'Thundher and turf, captain,' says I, 'look to leeward,' says I.

" 'What for?' says he.

" 'I think I see the land,' says I. So he ups with his bring-'um-near (that's what the sailors call a spy-glass, sir), and looks out, and, sure enough, it was.

" 'Hurrah!' says he, 'we're all right now; pull away, my boys,' says he.

" 'Take care you're not mistaken,' says I; 'maybe it's only a fog-bank, captain, darlint,' says I.

" 'Oh, no,' says he, 'it's the land in airnest.'

“ ‘ Oh, then, whereabouts in the wide world are we, captain ? ’ says I ; ‘ maybe it id be in Roosia or Proosia, or the Garman Oceant,’ says I.

“ ‘ Tut, you fool,’ says he, for he had that consaited way wid him—thinkin’ himself cleverer nor any one else—‘ tut, you fool,’ says he ; ‘ that’s France,’ says he.

“ ‘ Tare an ouns,’ says I, ‘ do you tell me so ? And how do you know it’s France it is, captain, dear,’ says I.

“ ‘ Bekase this is the Bay o’ Bishky we’re in now,’ says he.

“ ‘ Throth, I was thinkin’ so myself,’ says I, ‘ by the rowl it has ; for I often heerd av it in regard o’ that same ’ ; and, throth, the likes av it I never seen before nor since, and, with the help o’ God, never will.

“ ‘ Well, with that my heart begun to grow light, and when I seen my life was safe, I began to grow twice hungrier nor ever—so says I, ‘ Captain, jewel, I wish we had a gridiron.’

“ ‘ Why, then,’ says he, ‘ thundher and turf,’ says he, ‘ what put a gridiron into your head ? ’

“ ‘ Bekase I’m starvin’ with the hunger,’ says I.

“ ‘ And sure, bad luck to you,’ says he, ‘ you couldn’t ate a gridiron,’ says he, ‘ barrin you wor a pelican o’ the wildherness,’ says he.

“ ‘ Ate a gridiron ! ’ says I. ‘ Och, in throth, I’m not such a gommoch all out as that, anyhow. But sure if we had a gridiron we could dress a beefsteak,’ says I.

“ ‘ Arrah ! but where’s the beefsteak ? ’ says he.

“ ‘ Sure, couldn’t we cut a slice aff the pork ? ’ says I.

“ ‘ By gor, I never thought o’ that,’ says the captain ‘ You’re a clever fellow, Paddy,’ says he, laughin’.

“ ‘ Oh, there’s many a thrue word said in joke,’ says I.

“ ‘ Thru for you, Paddy,’ says he.

“ ‘ Well, then,’ says I, ‘ if you put me ashore there beyant ’ (for we were nearin’ the land all the time), ‘ and sure I can ask thim for to lind me the loan of a gridiron,’ says I.

“ ‘ Oh, by gor, the butther’s comin’ out o’ the stirabout in airnest now,’ says he. ‘ You gommoch,’ says he, ‘ sure I towld you before that’s France—and sure they’re all furriners there,’ says the captain.

“ ‘ Well,’ says I, ‘ and how do you know but I’m as good a furriner myself as any o’ thim ? ’

“ ‘ What do you mane ? ’ says he.

“ ‘ I mane,’ says I, ‘ what I towld you, that I’m as good a furriner myself as any o’ thim.’

" ' Make me sinsible,' says he.

" ' By dad, maybe that's more nor me, or greater nor me, could do,' says I ; and we all began to laugh at him, for I thought I'd pay him off for his bit o' consait about the Garman Oceant.

" ' Lave aff your humbuggin,' says he, ' I bid you, and tell me what it is you mane at all, at all.'

" ' Parly-voo frongsay ? ' says I.

" ' Oh, your humble sarvant,' says he. ' Why, by gor, you're a scholar, Paddy.'

" ' Throth, you may say that,' says I.

" ' Why, you're a clever fellow, Paddy,' says the captain, jeerin' like.

" ' You're not the first that said that,' says I, ' whether you joke or no.'

" ' Oh, but I'm in airnest,' says the captain. ' And do you tell me, Paddy,' says he, ' that you spake Frinch ? '

" ' Parly-voo frongsay ? ' says I.

" ' By gor, that bangs Banagher, and all the world knows Banagher bangs the devil. I never met the likes o' you, Paddy,' says he. ' Pull away, boys, and put Paddy ashore, and maybe we won't get a good bellyfull before long.'

" So, with that, it was no sooner said nor done—they pulled away and got close into shore in less than no time, and run the boat up in a little creek ; and a beautiful creek it was, with a lovely white sthrand, an illigant place for ladies to bathe in the summer ; and out I got, and it's stiff enough in my limbs I was afther bein' cramped up in the boat, and perished with the cowl'd and hunger ; but I contrived to scramble an, one way or the other, towards a little bit iv a wood that was close to the shore, and the smoke curlin' out of it, quite timpting like.

" ' By the powdhers o' war, I'm all right,' says I ; ' there's a house there '—and sure enough there was, and a parcel of men, women, and childher, ating their dinner round a table quite convainent. And so I wint up to the dure, and I thought I'd be very civil to thim, as I heerd the Frinch was always mighty p'lite intirely—and I thought I'd show them I knew what good manners was.

" So I took off my hat, and making a low bow, says I, ' God save all here,' says I.

" Well, to be sure, they all stopt ating at wanst, and begun to stare at me, and faith they almost looked me out of countenance—and I

thought to myself it was not good manners at all—more be token from furriners, which they call so mighty p'lite ; but I never minded that, in regard of wantin' the gridiron ; and so says I, ' I beg your pardon,' says I, ' for the liberty I take, but it's only bein' in disthress in regard of ating,' says I, ' that I make bowld to throuble yez, and if you could lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I, ' I'd be intirely obleeged to ye.'

" By gor, they all stared at me twice worse nor before, and with that, says I (knowing what was in their minds), ' Indeed it's thrue for you,' says I ; ' I'm tathered to pieces, and God knows I look quare enough, but it's by raison of the storm,' says I, ' which dhruv us ashore here below, and we're all starvin',' says I.

" So then they began to look at each other agin, and myself, seeing at wanst dirty thoughts was in their heads, and that they tuk me for a poor beggar comin' to crave charity—with that, says I, ' Oh ! not at all,' says I, ' by no manes ; we have plenty o' mate ourselves, there below, and we'll dhress it,' says I, ' if you would be plased to lind us the loan of a gridiron,' says I, makin' a low bow.

" Well, sir, with that, throth, they stared at me twice worse nor ever, and faith I began to think that maybe the captain was wrong, and that it was not France at all, at all ; and so says I—' I beg pardon, sir,' says I, to a fine ould man, with a head of hair as white as silver—' maybe I'm undher a mistake,' says I, ' but I thought I was in France, sir ; aren't you furriners ? ' says I—' Parly-voo frongsay ? '

" ' We, munseer,' says he.

" ' Then would you lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I, ' if you plase ? '

" Oh, it was thin that they stared at me as if I had siven heads ; and faith myself began to feel flustered like, and onaisy—and so, says I, making a bow and scrape agin, ' I know it's a liberty I take, sir,' says I, ' but it's only in the regard of bein' cast away, and if you plase, sir,' says I, ' Parly-voo frongsay ? '

" ' We, munseer,' says he, mighty sharp.

" ' Then would you lind me the loan of a gridiron ? ' says I, ' and you'll obleege me.'

" Well, sir, the old chap begun to munseer me, but the diyil a bit of a gridiron he'd gie me ; and so I began to think they were all neygars, for all their fine manners ; and, throth, my blood began to rise, and says I, ' By my sowl, if it was you was in disthress,' says I, ' and if it

was to ould Ireland you kem, it's not only the gridiron they'd give you if you ax'd it, but something to put an it too, and a dhrop of dhrink into the bargain, and cead mille failte.'

" Well, the word cead mille failte seemed to stchreck his heart, and the ould chap cocked his ear, and so I thought I'd give him another offer, and make him sinsible at last ; and so says I, wanst more, quite slow, that he might undherstand—' Parly—voo—frongsay, munseer ? '

" ' We, munseer,' says he.

" ' Then lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I, ' and bad scrán to you.'

" Well, bad win' to the bit of it he'd gi' me, and the ould chap begins bowin' and scrapin', and said something or other about a long tongs.

" ' Phoo !—the devil sweep yourself and tongs,' says I, ' I don't want a tongs at all, at all ; but can't you listen to raison,' says I—' Parly-voo frongsay ? '

" ' We, munseer.'

" ' Then lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I, ' and howld your prate.'

" Well, what would you think but he shook his owld noddle, as much as to say he wouldn't ; and so says I, ' Bad cess to the likes o' that I ever seen—throth if you were in my country, it's not that-a-way they'd use you ; the curse o' the crows on you, you ould sinner,' says I ; ' the divil a longer I'll darken your dure.'

" So he seen I was vexed, and I thought, as I was turnin' away, I seen him begin to relint, and that his conscience throubled him ; and says I, turnin' back, ' Well, I'll give you one chance more—you owld thief—are you a Chrishtan at all, at all ?—are you a furriner,' says I, ' that all the world calls so p'lite ? Bad luck to you ; do you undherstand your own language ?—Parly-voo frongsay ? ' says I.

" ' We, munseer,' says he.

" ' Then, thundher and turf,' says I, ' will you lind me the loan of a gridiron ? '

" Well, sir, the divil resave the bit of it he'd gi' me—and so with that, ' The curse o' the hungry on you, you owld negardly villain,' says I ; ' the back o' my hand and the sowl o' my foot to you ; that you may want a gridiron yourself yet,' says I ; ' and wherever I go, high and low, rich and poor shall hear o' you,' says I ; and with that I lift them there, sir, and kem away—and in throth it's often since that I thought that it was remarkable."

Mrs. ANNA JAMESON

1794-1860

THE STORY OF GÉNÉVIEVE

L'ART *de bien conter* is still a Frenchman's most admired talent. Our handsome and interesting beau, Edmonde, piques himself on this accomplishment, and is a "conteur" by profession. He related to us in the Tuileries, yesterday, the following anecdote, with infinite grace of elocution, and considerable effect, spite of his odd falsetto voice. The circumstances occurred at the time Le Noir was minister of the police : I forget the year.

Généviève de Sorbigny was the last of a noble family : young, beautiful, and a rich heiress, she seemed born to command all this world could yield of happiness. When left an orphan, at an early age, instead of being sent to a convent, as was then the universal custom, she was brought up under the care of a maternal aunt, who devoted herself to her education, and doated on her with an almost exclusive affection.

Généviève resided in the country with her aunt till she was about sixteen ; she was then brought to Paris to be united to the marquis of — ; it was a mere marriage *de convenance*, a family arrangement entered into when she was quite a child, according to the *ancien régime* ; and, unfortunately for Généviève, her affianced bridegroom was neither young nor amiable ; yet more unfortunately it happened that the marquis's cousin, the Baron de Villay, who generally accompanied him in his visits of ceremony, possessed all the qualities in which *he* was deficient ; being young and singularly handsome, " amiable," " spirituel." While the marquis, with the good breeding of that day, was bowing and paying his devoirs to the aunt of his intended (*sa future*), the young baron, with equal success, but in a very different style, was captivating the heart of the niece. Her extreme beauty had charmed him at the first glance, and her partiality, delicately and involuntarily betrayed, subdued every scruple, if he ever entertained any ; and so, in the usual course of things, they were soon irretrievably and *éperdument* in love with each other.

Généviève, to much gentleness of character, united firmness.

The preparations for the marriage went on ; the trousseau was bought ; the jewels set ; but the moment she was aware of her own sentiments she had courage enough to declare to her aunt that, rather than give her hand to the marquis, whom she detested past all her terms of detestation, she would throw herself into a nunnery, and endow it with her fortune. The poor aunt was thrown, by this unexpected declaration, into the utmost amazement and perplexity ; she was *au désespoir* ; such a thing had never been heard of or contemplated : but the tears of G  n  vi  ve prevailed ; the marriage, after a long negotiation, was broken off, and the baron appeared publicly as the suitor of G  n  vi  ve. The marquis politely challenged his cousin, and owed his life to his forbearance ; and the duel, and the cause of it, and the gallantry and generosity of De Villay, rendered him irresistible in the eyes of all the women in Paris, while to the heart of G  n  vi  ve he became dearer than ever.

To gain the favour of the aunt was now the only difficulty ; she had ever regarded him with ill-concealed aversion and suspicion. Some mystery hung over his character ; there were certain reports whispered relative to his former life and conduct which it was equally difficult to discredit and to disprove. Besides, though of a distinguished family, he was poor, most of his ancestral possessions being confiscated or dissipated ; and his father was notoriously a *mauvais sujet*. All these reports and representations appeared to the impassioned G  n  vi  ve mere barbarous calumnies, invented to injure her love ; and regarding herself as the primal cause of these slanders, they rather added to the strength of her attachment. A reluctant consent was at last wrung from her aunt, and G  n  vi  ve was united to her lover.

The ch  teau of the baron was situated in one of the wildest districts of the wild and desolate coast of Bretagne. The people who inhabited the country round were a ferocious, half-civilised race, and, in general, desperate smugglers and pirates. They had been driven to this mode of life by a dreadful famine and the oppressions of the provincial tax-gatherers, and had pursued it partly from choice, partly from necessity. They had carried on for near half a century a constant and systematic warfare against the legal authorities of the province, in which they were generally victorious. No revenue officer or *exempt* dare set his foot within a certain district ; and when the tempestuous season, or any other accident, prevented them from following their lawless trade

on the sea, they dispersed themselves through the country in regularly organised bands, and committed the most formidable depredations, extending their outrages even as far as St. Pol. Such was their desperate courage, the incredible celerity of their movements, and the skill of their leaders, that though a few stragglers had been occasionally shot, all attempts to take any of them alive, or to penetrate into their secret fastnesses, proved unavailing.

The baron had come to Paris for the purpose of representing the disturbed state of his district to the government and procuring an order from the minister of the interior to embody his own tenantry and dependants into a sort of militia for the defence of his property, and for the purpose of bringing these marauders to justice, if possible. He was at first refused, but after a few months' delay, money and the interest of G  n  vi  ve's family prevailed ; the order was granted, and he prepared to return to his ch  teau. The aunt and all her friends remonstrated against the idea of exposing his young wife to such revolting scenes, and insisted that she should be left behind at Paris ; to which he agreed with seeming readiness, only referring the decision to G  n  vi  ve's own election. She did not hesitate one moment ; she adored her husband, and the thought of being separated from him in this early stage of their union was worse than any apprehended danger : she declared her resolution to accompany him. At length the matter was thus compromised : they consented that G  n  vi  ve should spend four months of every year in Bretagne, and the other eight at Paris, or at her uncle's ch  teau in Auvergne ; in fact, so little was known then in the capital of what was passing in the distant provinces that G  n  vi  ve only, being prepared by her husband, could form some idea of what she was about to encounter.

On their arrival the peasantry were immediately armed, and the ch  teau converted into a kind of garrison, regularly fortified. A continual panic seemed to prevail through the whole household, and she heard of nothing from morning till night but the desperate deeds of the marauders and the exploits of their captain, to whom they attributed more marvellous atrocities than were ever related of Barbone, or Blue Beard himself. G  n  vi  ve was at first in constant terror ; finding, however, that week after week passed and the danger, though continually talked of, never appeared, she was rather excited and *d  sennuy  e* by the continual recurrence of these alarms. She would have been perfectly happy in her husband's increasing and

devoted tenderness, but for his frequent absences in pursuit of the smugglers either on sea or on shore, and the dangers to which she fancied him exposed: but even those absences and these dangers endeared him to her, and kept alive all the romantic fervour of her attachment. He was not only the lord of her affections, but the hero of her imagination. The time allotted for her stay insensibly passed away; the four months were under different pretences prolonged to six, and then, her confinement drawing near, it was judged safest to defer her journey to Paris till after her recovery.

Généviève in due time became the mother of a son; an event which filled her heart with a thousand delicious emotions of gratitude, pride, and delight. It seemed to have a very different and most inexplicable effect on her husband the baron's behaviour. He became gloomy, anxious, abstracted, and his absences, on various pretexts, more frequent than ever; but what appeared most painful and incomprehensible to Généviève's maternal feelings was his indifference to his child. He would hardly be persuaded even to look at it, and if he met it smiling in its nurse's arms, would perhaps gaze for a moment, then turn away as from an object which struck him with a secret horror.

One day as Généviève was sitting alone in her dressing-room, fondling her infant, and thinking mournfully on this change in her husband's conduct, her *femme-de-chambre*, a faithful creature who had been brought up with her, and accompanied her from Paris, came into the room, pale as ashes; and throwing herself at her feet, told her that, though regard for her health had hitherto kept her silent, she could no longer conceal the dreadful secret which weighed upon her spirits. She then proceeded to inform the shuddering and horror-struck Généviève that the robbers who had excited so much terror, and were now supposed to be at a distance, were then actually in the château: that they consisted of the very servants and immediate dependants, with the baron himself at their head. She supposed they had been less on their guard during Généviève's confinement; and many minute circumstances had at first awaked, and then confirmed her suspicions. Then embracing her mistress's knees, she besought her, for the love of Heaven, to return to Paris instantly, with those of her own attendants on whom she could securely depend, before they were all murdered in their beds.

Généviève, as soon as she had recovered from her first dizzy horror and astonishment, would have rejected the whole as a dream, an

impossible fiction. She thought upon her husband, on all that her fond heart had admired in him, and all that till lately she had found him—his noble form, his manly beauty, his high and honourable bearing, and all his love, his truth, his tenderness for her—and could *he* be a robber, a ruffian, an assassin? No; though her woman's attachment and truth were beyond suspicion, her tale too horribly consistent for disbelief, G  n  vi  ve would trust to her own senses alone to confirm or disprove the hideous imputation. She commanded her maid to maintain an absolute silence on the subject and leave the rest to her.

The same evening the baron informed his wife that he was obliged to set off before light next morning in pursuit of a party of smugglers who had landed at St. Paul; and that she must not be surprised if she missed him at an early hour. His absence, he assured her, would not be long: he should certainly return before the evening. They retired to rest earlier than usual. G  n  vi  ve, as it may be imagined, did not sleep, but she lay perfectly still as if in a profound slumber. About the middle of the night she heard her husband softly rise from his bed and dress himself; and taking his pistols he left the room. G  n  vi  ve rushed to the window which overlooked the courtyard, but there neither horses nor attendants were waiting; she flew to another window which commanded the back of the ch  teau—there, too, all was still; nothing was to be seen but the moonlight shadows on the pavement. She hastily threw round her a dark cloak or wrapper, and followed her husband, whose footsteps were still within hearing. It was not difficult, for he walked slowly, stopping every now and then, listening, and apparently irresolute: he crossed the court and several outbuildings, and part of the ruins of a former ch  teau, till he came to an old well which, being dry, had long been disused and shut up, and moving aside the trap-door which covered the mouth of it, he disappeared in an instant. G  n  vi  ve with difficulty suppressed a shriek of terror. She followed, however, with a desperate courage, groped her way down the well by means of some broken stairs, and pursued her husband's steps, guided only by the sound on the hollow damp earth. Suddenly a distant light and voices broke upon her eye and ear; and stealing along the wall, she hid herself behind one of the huge buttresses which supported the vault above: she beheld what she was half prepared to see—a party of ruffians, who were assembled round a board drinking. They received the baron with respect as their chief, but with sullen suspicious looks, and an ominous

silence. G n vi ve could distinguish among the faces many familiar to her, which she was accustomed to see daily around her, working in the gardens or attending in the ch teau ; among them the concierge, or house-steward, who appeared to have some authority over the rest. The wife of this man was the nurse of G n vi ve's child. The baron took his seat without speaking. After some boisterous conversation among the rest, carried on in an unintelligible dialect, a quarrel arose between the concierge and another villain, both apparently intoxicated ; the baron attempted to part them, and the uproar became general. The whole was probably a preconcerted plan, for from reproaching each other they proceeded to attack the baron himself with the most injurious epithets ; they accused him of a design to betray them ; they compared him to his father, the old baron, who had never flinched from their cause, and had at last died in it ; they said they knew well that a large party of regular troops had lately arrived at Saint-Brieu, and they insisted it was with his knowledge, that he was about to give them up to justice, to make his own peace with government, etc.

The concierge, who was by far the most insolent and violent of these mutineers, at length silenced the others, and affecting a tone of moderation he proposed, and his proposal was received with an approving shout, that the baron should give up his infant son into the hands of the band ; that they should take him to the island of Guernsey, and keep him there as a pledge of his father's fidelity till the regular troops were withdrawn from the province. How must the mother's heart have trembled and died away within her ! She listened breathless for her husband's reply. The baron had hitherto with difficulty restrained himself, and attempted to prove how absurd and unfounded was their accusation, since his safety was involved in theirs, and he would, as their leader, be considered as the greatest criminal of all. His eyes now flashed with fury ; he sprung upon the concierge like a roused tiger, and dragged him by the collar from amid the mutinous group. A struggle ensued, and the wretch fell, stabbed to the heart by his master's hand ; a crowd of ferocious faces then closed around the baron—G n vi ve heard—saw no more—her senses left her.

When she recovered she was in perfect silence and darkness, and felt like one awakening from a terrible dream ; the first image which clearly presented itself to her mind was that of her child in the power of these ruffians, and their daggers at her husband's throat. The maddening thought swallowed up every other feeling, and lent her

for the moment strength and wings ; she rushed back through the darkness, fearless for herself ; crossed the court, the galleries ;—all was still : it seemed to her affrighted imagination that the château was forsaken by its inhabitants. She reached her child's room, she flew to his cradle and drew aside the curtain with a desperate hand, expecting to find it empty ; he was quietly sleeping in his beauty and innocence : G  n  vi  ve uttered a cry of joy and thankfulness, and fell on the bed in strong convulsions.

Many hours elapsed before she was restored to herself. The first object she beheld was her husband watching tenderly over her, her first emotion was joy for his safety—she dared not ask him to account for it. She then called for her son ; he was brought to her, and from that moment she would never suffer him to leave her. With the quick wit of a woman, or rather with the prompt resolution of a mother trembling for her child, G  n  vi  ve was no sooner sufficiently recovered to think than she had formed her decision and acted upon it ; she accounted for her sudden illness and terrors under pretence that she had been disturbed by a frightful dream : she believed, she said, that the dulness and solitude of the ch  teau affected her spirits, that the air disagreed with her child, and that it was necessary that she should instantly return to Paris. The baron attempted first to rally and then to reason with her : he consented—then retracted his consent ; seemed irresolute—but his affections finally prevailed over his suspicions, and preparations were instantly made for their departure, as if he intended to accompany her.

Putting her with her maid and child into a travelling carriage, he armed a few of his most confidential servants, and rode by her side till they came to Saint-Brieu : he then turned back in spite of all her entreaties, promising to rejoin her at Paris within a few days. He had never during the journey uttered a word which could betray his knowledge that she had any motive for her journey but that which she avowed ; only at parting he laid his finger expressively on his lip, and gave her one look full of meaning : it could not be mistaken ; it said, " G  n  vi  ve ! your husband's life depends on your discretion, and he trusts you." She would have thrown herself into his arms, but he gently replaced her in the carriage, and remounting his horse, rode back alone to the ch  teau.

G  n  vi  ve arrived safely at Paris, and commanded her maid, as she valued both their lives, and on pain of her eternal displeasure, not

to breathe a syllable of what had passed, firmly resolved that nothing should tear the terrible secret from her own breast : but the profound melancholy which had settled on her heart, and her pining and altered looks, could not escape the eyes of her affectionate aunt ; and her maid, either through indiscretion, timidity, or a sense of duty, on being questioned, revealed all she knew, and more than she knew. The aunt, in a transport of terror and indignation, sent information to the governor of the police, and Le Noir instantly summoned the unfortunate wife of the baron to a private interview.

Généviève, though taken by surprise, did not lose her presence of mind, and at first she steadily denied every word of her maid's deposition ; but her courage and her affection were no match for the minister's art : when he assured her he had already sufficient proof of her husband's guilt, and promised, with jesuitical equivocation, that if she would confess all she knew his life should not be touched, that due regard should be had for the honour of his family and hers, and that he (Le Noir) would exert the power which he alone possessed to detach him from his present courses and his present associates without the least publicity or scandal—she yielded, and on this promise being most solemnly reiterated and confirmed by an oath, revealed all she knew.

In a short time afterwards the baron disappeared, and was never heard of more. In vain did his wretched wife appeal to Le Noir and recall the promise he had given : he swore to her that her husband still *lived*, but more than this he would not discover. In vain she supplicated, wept, offered all her fortune for permission to share his exile if he were banished, his dungeon if he were a prisoner—Le Noir was inexorable.

Généviève, left in absolute ignorance of her husband's fate, tortured by a suspense more dreadful than the most dreadful certainty, by remorse and grief which refused all comfort, died broken-hearted : what became of the baron was never known.

I could not exactly learn the fate of his son : it is said that he lived to man's estate, that he took the name of his mother's family, and died a violent death during the Revolution.

THOMAS CROFTON CROKER

1798-1854

DANIEL O'ROURKE

PEOPLE may have heard of the renowned adventures of Daniel O'Rourke, but how few are there who know that the cause of all his perils, above and below, was neither more nor less than his having slept under the walls of the Phooka's tower ! I knew the man well ; he lived at the bottom of Hungry Hill, just at the right-hand side of the road as you go towards Bantry.

An old man was he at the time that he told me the story, with grey hair and a red nose : and it was on June 25, 1813, that I heard it from his own lips, as he sat smoking his pipe under the old poplar tree, on as fine an evening as ever shone from the sky. I was going to visit the caves in Dursey Island, having spent the morning at Glengariff.

" I am often *axed* to tell it, sir," said he, " so that this is not the first time. The master's son, you see, had come from beyond foreign parts in France and Spain, as young gentlemen used to go, before Buonaparte or any such was heard of ; and sure enough there was a dinner given to all the people on the ground, gentle and simple, high and low, rich and poor. The *ould* gentlemen were the gentlemen, after all, saving your honour's presence. They'd swear at a body a little, to be sure, and maybe give one a cut of a whip now and then, but we were no losers by it in the end ; and they were so easy and civil, and kept such rattling houses, and thousands of welcomes ; and there was no grinding for rent, and few agents ; and there was hardly a tenant on the estate that did not taste of his landlord's bounty often and often in the year ;—but now it's another thing : no matter for that, sir, for I'd better be telling you my story.

" Well, we had everything of the best, and plenty of it ; and we ate, and we drank, and we danced, and the young master by the same token danced with Peggy Barry, from the Bohereen—a lovely young couple they were, though they are both low enough now. To make a long story short, I got, as a body may say, the same thing as tipsy almost, for I can't remember ever at all, no ways, how it was I left the

place : only I did leave it, that's certain. Well, I thought, for all that, in myself, I'd just step to Molly Cronohan's, the fairy-woman, to speak a word about the bracket heifer that was bewitched ; and so as I was crossing the stepping-stones of the ford of Ballyasheenough, and was looking up at the stars and blessing myself—for why ? it was Lady-day—I missed my foot, and souse I fell into the water. ' Death alive ! ' thought I, ' I'll be drowned now ! '

" However, I began swimming, swimming, swimming away for the dear life, till at last I got ashore, somehow or other, but never the one of me can tell how, upon a *dissolute* island.

" I wandered and wandered about there, without knowing where I wandered, until at last I got into a big bog. The moon was shining as bright as day, or your fair lady's eyes, sir (with your pardon for mentioning her), and I looked east and west, and north and south, and every way, and nothing did I see but bog, bog, bog ;—I could never find out how I got into it ; and my heart grew cold with fear, for sure and certain I was that it would be my *berrin* place. So I sat down upon a stone, which, as good luck would have it, was close by me, and I began to scratch my head and sing the *Ullagone*—when all of a sudden the moon grew black, and I looked up, and saw something for all the world as if it was moving down between me and it, and I could not tell what it was. Down it came with a pounce, and looked at me full in the face ; and what was it but an eagle ? as fine a one as ever flew from the kingdom of Kerry.

" So he looked at me in the face, and says he to me, ' Daniel O'Rourke,' says he, ' how do you do ? '

" ' Very well, I thank you, sir,' says I ; ' I hope you're well ' ; wondering out of my senses all the time how an eagle came to speak like a Christian.

" ' What brings you here, Dan ? ' says he.

" ' Nothing at all, sir,' says I ; ' only I wish I was safe home again.'

" ' Is it out of the island you want to go, Dan ? ' says he.

" ' 'Tis, sir,' says I ; so I up and told him how I had taken a drop too much ; and fell into the water ; how I swam to the island ; and how I got into the bog and did not know my way out of it.

" ' Dan,' says he after a minute's thought, ' though it is very improper for you to get drunk on Lady-day, yet as you are a decent

sober man, who 'tends mass well, and never flings stones at me nor mine, nor cries out after us in the fields—my life for yours,' says he ; 'so get up on my back, and grip me well for fear you'd fall off, and I'll fly you out of the bog.'

" 'I am afraid,' says I, 'your honour's making game of me ; for who ever heard of riding a-horseback on an eagle before ?'

" ' 'Pon the honour of a gentleman,' says he, putting his right foot on his breast, 'I am quite in earnest ; and so now either take my offer or starve in the bog ; besides, I see that your weight is sinking the stone.'

" It was true enough as he said, for I found the stone every minute going from under me. I had no choice ; so thinks I to myself, faint heart never won fair lady, and this is fair persuadance :—'I thank your honour,' says I, 'for the loan of your civility, and I'll take your kind offer.'

" I therefore mounted upon the back of the eagle, and held him tight enough by the throat, and up he flew in the air like a lark. Little I knew the trick he was going to serve me. Up, up, up—God knows how far up he flew.

" 'Why, then,' said I to him—thinking he did not know the right road home—very civilly, because why ?—I was in his power entirely ; —'sir,' says I, 'please your honour's glory, and with humble submission to your better judgment, if you'd fly down a bit, you're now just over my cabin, and I could be put down there, and many thanks to your worship.'

" 'Arrah, Dan,' said he, 'do you think me a fool ? Look down in the next field, and don't you see two men and a gun ? By my word it would be no joke to be shot this way, to oblige a drunken blackguard that I picked up off of a *could* stone in a bog.'

" 'Bother you,' said I to myself, but I did not speak out, for where was the use ? Well, sir, up he kept flying, flying, and I asking him every minute to fly down, and all to no use.


" 'Where in the world are you going, sir ?' says I to him.

" 'Hold your tongue, Dan,' says he ; 'mind your own business, and don't be interfering with the business of other people.'

" 'Faith, this is my business, I think,' says I.

" 'Be quiet, Dan,' says he ; so I said no more.

" At last where should we come to but to the moon itself. Now you can't see it from this, but there is, or there was in my time, a

reaping-hook sticking out of the side of the moon, this way (drawing the figure thus  on the ground with the end of his stick).

“ ‘Dan,’ said the eagle, ‘I’m tired with this long fly; I had no notion ’twas so far.’

“ ‘And my lord, sir,’ said I, ‘who in the world *axed* you to fly so far—was it I? Did not I beg, and pray, and beseech you to stop half an hour ago?’

“ ‘There’s no use talking, Dan,’ said he; ‘I’m tired bad enough, so you must get off and sit down on the moon until I rest myself.’

“ ‘Is it sit down on the moon?’ said I; ‘is it upon that little round thing, then? why then, sure, I’d fall off in a minute, and be *kilt* and split, and smashed all to bits: you are a vile deceiver—so you are.’

“ ‘Not at all, Dan,’ said he; ‘you can catch fast hold of the reaping-hook that’s sticking out of the side of the moon, and ’twill keep you up.’

“ ‘I won’t then,’ said I.

“ ‘Maybe not,’ said he quite quiet. ‘If you don’t, my man, I shall just give you a shake, and one slap of my wing, and send you down to the ground, where every bone in your body will be smashed as small as a drop of dew on a cabbage-leaf in the morning.’

“ ‘Why, then, I’m in a fine way,’ said I to myself, ‘ever to have come along with the likes of you’; and so giving him a hearty curse in Irish, for fear he’d know what I said, I got off his back with a heavy heart, took a hold of the reaping-hook, and sat down upon the moon; and a mighty cold seat it was, I can tell you that.

“ When he had me there fairly landed, he turned about on me, and said, ‘Good-morning to you, Daniel O’Rourke,’ said he, ‘I think I’ve nicked you fairly now. You robbed my nest last year’ (’twas true enough for him, but how he found it out is hard to say), ‘and in return you are freely welcome to cool your heels dangling upon the moon like a cockthrow.’

“ ‘Is that all, and is this the way you leave me, you brute you!’ says I. ‘You ugly unnatural *baste*, and is this the way you serve me at last? Bad luck to yourself, with your hook’d nose, and to all your breed, you blackguard.’

“ ‘Twas all to no manner of use; he spread out his great big wings, burst out a-laughing, and flew away like lightning. I bawled after him to stop; but I might have called and bawled for ever without his minding me. Away he went, and I never saw him from that day to this—sorrow fly away with him! You may be sure I was in a discon-

solate condition, and kept roaring out for the bare grief, when all at once a door opened right in the middle of the moon, creaking on its hinges as if it had not been opened for a month before—I suppose they never thought of greasing 'em—and out there walks—who do you think but the man in the moon himself? I knew him by his bush.

“ ‘ Good-morrow to you, Daniel O'Rourke,’ said he : ‘ how do you do ? ’

“ ‘ Very well, thank your honour,’ said I. ‘ I hope your honour's well.’

“ ‘ What brought you here, Dan ? ’ said he. So I told him how I was a little overtaken in liquor at the master's, and how I was cast on a *dissolute* island, and how I lost my way in the bog, and how the thief of an eagle promised to fly me out of it, and how instead of that he had fled me up to the moon.

“ ‘ Dan,’ said the man in the moon, taking a pinch of snuff, when I was done, ‘ you must not stay here.’

“ ‘ Indeed, sir,’ says I, ‘ 'tis much against my will I'm here at all ; but how am I to go back ? ’

“ ‘ That's your business,’ said he, ‘ Dan : mine is to tell you that here you must not stay, so be off in less than no time.’

“ ‘ I'm doing no harm,’ says I, ‘ only holding on hard by the reaping-hook lest I fall off.’

“ ‘ That's what you must not do, Dan,’ says he.

“ ‘ Pray, sir,’ says I, ‘ may I ask how many you are in family that you would not give a poor traveller lodging : I'm sure 'tis not so often you're troubled with strangers coming to see you, for 'tis a long way.’

“ ‘ I'm by myself, Dan,’ says he ; ‘ but you'd better let go the reaping-hook.’

“ ‘ Faith, and with your leave,’ says I, ‘ I'll not let go the grip, and the more you bids me, the more I won't let go—so I will.’

“ ‘ You had better, Dan,’ says he again.

“ ‘ Why, then, my little fellow,’ says I, taking the whole weight of him with my eye from head to foot, ‘ there are two words to that bargain ; and I'll not budge, but you may if you like.’

• “ ‘ We'll see how that is to be,’ says he ; and back he went, giving the door such a great bang after him (for it was plain he was huffed) that I thought the moon and all would fall down with it.

“ Well, I was preparing myself to try strength with him, when back again he comes with the kitchen cleaver in his hand, and without saying

a word, he gives two bangs to the handle of the reaping-hook that was keeping me up, and *whap!* it came in two.

“ ‘ Good-morning to you, Dan,’ says the spiteful little old black-guard when he saw me cleanly falling down with a bit of the handle in my hand : ‘ I thank you for your visit, and fair weather after you, Daniel.’

“ ‘ I had not time to make any answer to him, for I was tumbling over and over, and rolling and rolling at the rate of a fox-hunt. ‘ God help me,’ says I, ‘ but this is a pretty pickle for a decent man to be seen in at this time of night ; I am now sold fairly.’

“ ‘ The word was not out of my mouth, when whiz ! what should fly by close to my ear but a flock of wild geese, all the way from my own bog of Ballyasheenough, else how should they know *me* ? The *ould* gander, who was their general, turning about his head, cried out to me, ‘ Is that you, Dan ? ’

“ ‘ ‘ The same,’ said I, not a bit daunted now at what he said, for I was by this time used to all kinds of *bedevilment*, and, besides, I knew him of *ould*.

“ ‘ ‘ Good-morrow to you,’ says he, ‘ Daniel O’Rourke ; how are you in health this morning ? ’

“ ‘ ‘ Very well, sir,’ says I, ‘ I thank you kindly,’ drawing my breath, for I was mightily in want of some. ‘ I hope your honour’s the same.’

“ ‘ ‘ I think ’tis falling you are, Daniel,’ says he.

“ ‘ ‘ You may say that, sir,’ says I.

“ ‘ ‘ And where are you going all the way so fast ? ’ said the gander.

“ ‘ So I told him how I had taken the drop, and how I came on the island, and how I lost my way in the bog, and how the thief of an eagle flew me up to the moon, and how the man in the moon turned me out.

“ ‘ ‘ Dan,’ said he, ‘ I’ll save you ; put out your hand and catch me by the leg, and I’ll fly you home.’

“ ‘ ‘ Sweet is your hand in a pitcher of honey, my jewel,’ says I, though all the time I thought in myself that I don’t much trust you ; but there was no help, so I caught the gander by the leg, and away I and the other geese flew after him as fast as hops.

“ ‘ We flew, and we flew, and we flew, until we came right over the wide ocean. I knew it well, for I saw Cape Clear to my right hand sticking up out of the water.

“ ‘ ‘ Ah ! my lord,’ said I to the goose, for I thought it best to keep a civil tongue in my head anyway, ‘ fly to land, if you please.’

" 'It is impossible, you see, Dan,' said he, 'for a while, because you see we are going to Arabia.'

" 'To Arabia?' said I; 'that's surely some place in foreign parts, far away. Oh, Mr. Goose! why then, to be sure, I'm a man to be pitied among you.'

" 'Whist, whist, you fool,' said he, 'hold your tongue; I tell you Arabia is a very decent sort of place, as like West Carbery as one egg is like another, only there is a little more sand there.'

" 'Just as we were talking a ship hove in sight, scudding so beautiful before the wind: 'Ah! then, sir,' said I, 'will you drop me on the ship, if you please?'

" 'We are not fair over it,' said he.

" 'We are,' said I.

" 'We are not,' said he. 'If I dropped you now, you would go splash into the sea.'

" 'I would not,' says I: 'I know better than that, for it's just clean under us, so let me drop now at once.'

" 'If you must, you must,' said he. 'There, take your own way'; and he opened his claw, and faith he was right—sure enough I came down plump into the very bottom of the salt sea! Down to the very bottom I went, and I gave myself up then for ever, when a whale walked up to me, scratching himself after his night's sleep, and looked me full in the face, and never the word did he say, but lifting up his tail he splashed me all over again with the cold salt water, till there wasn't a dry stitch upon my whole carcass; and I heard somebody saying—'twas a voice I knew too—'Get up, you drunken brute, off of that'; and with that I woke up, and there was Judy with a tub full of water, which she was splashing all over me,—for, rest her soul! though she was a good wife, she never could bear to see me in drink, and had a bitter hand of her own!

" 'Get up,' said she again; 'and of all places in the parish would no place *sarve* your turn to lie down upon but under the *ould* walls of Carrigaphooka? an uneasy resting I am sure you had of it.'

" 'And sure enough I had; for I was fairly bothered out of my senses with eagles, and men of the moon, and flying ganders, and whales, driving me through bogs, and up to the moon, and down to the bottom of the green ocean. If I was in drink ten times over, long would it be before I'd lie down in the same spot again, I know that.'

THE LADY OF GOLLERUS

THOMAS CROFTON CROKER

ON the shore of Smerwick harbour, one fine summer's morning, just at daybreak, stood Dick Fitzgerald "shogging the dudeen," which may be translated, smoking his pipe. The sun was gradually rising behind the lofty Brandon, the dark sea was getting green in the light, and the mists, clearing away out of the valleys, went rolling and curling like the smoke from the corner of Dick's mouth.

" 'Tis just the pattern of a pretty morning," said Dick, taking the pipe from between his lips, and looking towards the distant ocean, which lay as still and tranquil as a tomb of polished marble. " Well, to be sure," continued he, after a pause, " 'tis mighty lonesome to be talking to one's self by way of company, and not to have another soul to answer one—nothing but the child of one's own voice, the echo ! I know this, that if I had the luck, or maybe the misfortune," said he with a melancholy smile, " to have the woman, it would not be this way with me !—and what in the wide world is a man without a wife ? He's no more surely than a bottle without a drop of drink in it, or dancing without music, or the left leg of a scissors, or a fishing-line without a hook, or any other matter that is no ways complete.—Is it not so ? " said Dick Fitzgerald, casting his eyes towards a rock upon the strand, which, though it could not speak, stood up as firm and looked as bold as ever Kerry witness did.

But what was his astonishment at beholding, just at the foot of that rock, a beautiful young creature combing her hair, which was of a sea-green colour ; and now the salt water shining on it appeared, in the morning light, like melted butter upon cabbage.

Dick guessed at once that she was a Merrow, although he had never seen one before, for he spied the *cohuleen driuth*, or little enchanted cap, which the sea-people use for diving down into the ocean, lying upon the strand near her ; and he had heard that if once he could possess himself of the cap she would lose the power of going away into the water : so he seized it with all speed, and she, hearing the noise, turned her head about as natural as any Christian.

When the Merrow saw that her little diving-cap was gone, the salt

tears—doubly salt, no doubt, from her—came trickling down her cheeks, and she began a low mournful cry with just the tender voice of a new-born infant. Dick, although he knew well enough what she was crying for, determined to keep the *cohuleen driuth*, let her cry never so much, to see what luck would come out of it. Yet he could not help pitying her; and when the dumb thing looked up in his face, and her cheeks all moist with tears, 'twas enough to make any one feel, let alone Dick, who had ever and always, like most of his countrymen, a mighty tender heart of his own.

"Don't cry, my darling," said Dick Fitzgerald; but the Merrow, like any bold child, only cried the more for that.

Dick sat himself down by her side, and took hold of her hand by way of comforting her. 'Twas in no particular an ugly hand, only there was a small web between the fingers, as there is in a duck's foot; but 'twas as thin and as white as the skin between egg and shell.

"What's your name, my darling?" says Dick, thinking to make her conversant with him; but he got no answer; and he was certain sure now, either that she could not speak, or did not understand him: he therefore squeezed her hand in his, as the only way he had of talking to her. It's the universal language, and there's not a woman in the world, be she fish or lady, that does not understand it.

The Merrow did not seem much displeased at this mode of conversation; and, making an end of her whining all at once—"Man," says she, looking up in Dick Fitzgerald's face, "man, will you eat me?"

"By all the red petticoats and check aprons between Dingle and Tralee," cried Dick, jumping up in amazement, "I'd as soon eat myself, my jewel! Is it I eat you, my pet? Now, 'twas some ugly ill-looking thief of a fish put that notion into your own pretty head, with the nice green hairdown upon it, that is so cleanly combed out this morning!"

"Man," said the Merrow, "what will you do with me if you won't eat me?" Dick's thoughts were running on a wife: he saw, at the first glimpse, that she was handsome; but since she spoke, and spoke, too, like any real woman, he was fairly in love with her. 'Twas the neat way she called him man that settled the matter entirely.

"Fish," says Dick, trying to speak to her after her own short fashion; "fish," says he, "here's my word, fresh and fasting, for you this blessed morning, that I'll make you Mistress Fitzgerald before all the world, and that's what I'll do."

"Never say the word twice," says she, "I'm ready and willing to

be yours, Mister Fitzgerald ; but stop, if you please, till I twist up my hair." It was some time before she had settled it entirely to her liking ; for she guessed, I suppose, that she was going among strangers, where she would be looked at. When that was done, the Merrow put the comb in her pocket, and then bent down her head and whispered some words to the water that was close to the foot of the rock.

Dick saw the murmur of the words upon the top of the sea, going out towards the wide ocean, just like a breath of wind rippling along, and, says he, in the greatest wonder, " Is it speaking you are, my darling, to the salt water ? "

" It's nothing else," says she, quite carelessly, " I'm just sending word home to my father not to be waiting breakfast for me ; just to keep him from being uneasy in his mind."

" And who's your father, my duck ? " says Dick.

" What ! " said the Merrow, " did you never hear of my father ? he's the king of the waves, to be sure ! "

" And yourself, then, is a real king's daughter ? " said Dick, opening his two eyes to take a full and true survey of his wife that was to be. " Oh, I'm nothing else but a made man with you, and a king your father—to be sure he has all the money that's down in the bottom of the sea ! "

" Money," repeated the Merrow, " what's money ? "

" 'Tis no bad thing to have when one wants it," replied Dick ; " and maybe now the fishes have the understanding to bring up whatever you bid them ? "

" Oh, yes," said the Merrow, " they bring me what I want."

" To speak the truth then," said Dick, " 'tis a straw bed I have at home before you, and that, I'm thinking, is no ways fitting for a king's daughter ; so if 'twould not be displeasing to you, just to mention, a nice feather bed, with a pair of new blankets—but what am I talking about ? maybe you have no such things as beds down under the water ? "

" By all means," said she, " Mr. Fitzgerald—plenty of beds at your service. I've fourteen oyster beds of my own, not to mention one just planting for the rearing of young ones."

" You have," says Dick, scratching his head and looking a little puzzled. " 'Tis a feather bed I was speaking of—but clearly, yours is the very cut of a decent plan, to have bed and supper so handy to each other, that a person when they'd have the one need never ask for the other." However, bed or no bed, money or no money. Dick Fitzgerald

determined to marry the Merrow, and the Merrow had given her consent. Away they went, therefore, across the strand, from Gollerus to Ballinrunnig, where Father Fitzgibbon happened to be that morning.

"There are two words to this bargain, Dick Fitzgerald," said his reverence, looking mighty glum. "And is it a fishy woman you'd marry?—the Lord preserve us!—Send the scaly creature home to her own people, that's my advice to you, wherever she came from."

Dick had the *cohuleen driuth* in his hand, and was about to give it back to the Merrow, who looked covetously at it, but he thought for a moment, and then says he :

"Please, your reverence, she's a king's daughter."

"If she was the daughter of fifty kings," said Father Fitzgibbon, "I tell you, you can't marry her, she being a fish."

"Please, your reverence," said Dick again, in an undertone, "she's as mild and beautiful as the moon."

"If she was as mild and as beautiful as the sun, moon, and the stars, all put together, I tell you, Dick Fitzgerald," said the priest, stamping his right foot, "you can't marry her, she being a fish !"

"But she has all the gold that's down in the sea only for the asking, and I'm a made man if I marry her : and," said Dick, looking up slyly, "I can make it worth any one's while to do the job."

"Oh ! that alters the case entirely," replied the priest ; "why, there's some reason now in what you say : why didn't you tell me this before?—marry her by all means, if she was ten times a fish. Money, you know, is not to be refused in these bad times, and I may as well have the hansel of it as another that maybe would not take half the pains in counselling you that I have done."

So Father Fitzgibbon married Dick Fitzgerald to the Merrow, and, like any loving couple, they returned to Gollerus well pleased with each other. Everything prospered with Dick—he was at the sunny side of the world ; the Merrow made the best of wives, and they lived together in the greatest contentment.

It was wonderful to see, considering where she had been brought up, how she would busy herself about the house, and how well she nursed the children, for at the end of three years there were as many young Fitzgeralds—two boys and a girl. In short, Dick was a happy man, and so he might have continued to the end of his days if he had only the sense to take proper care of what he had got ; many another man, however, beside Dick, has not had wit enough to do that.

One day when Dick was obliged to go to Tralee, he left the wife

minding the children at home after him, and thinking she had plenty to do without disturbing his fishing-tackle.

Dick was no sooner gone than Mrs. Fitzgerald set about cleaning up the house, and chancing to pull down a fishing-net, what should she find behind it, in a hole in the wall, but her own *cohuleen driuth*.

She took it out and looked at it, and then she thought of her father the king, and her mother the queen, and her brothers and sisters, and she felt a longing to go back to them.

She sat down on a little stool and thought over the happy days she had spent under the sea ; then she looked at her children, and thought on the love and affection of poor Dick, and how it would break his heart to lose her. " But," says she, " he won't lose me entirely, for I'll come back to him again, and who can blame me for going to see my father and my mother after being so long away from them ? "

She got up and went towards the door, but came back again to look once more at the child that was sleeping in the cradle. She kissed it gently, and, as she kissed it, a tear trembled for an instant in her eye, and then fell on its rosy cheek. She wiped away the tear, and turning to the eldest, the little girl, told her to take good care of her brothers, and to be a good child herself, until she came back. The Merrow then went down to the strand. The sea was lying calm and smooth, just heaving and glittering in the sun, and she thought she heard a faint sweet singing, inviting her to come down. All her old ideas and feelings came flooding over her mind, Dick and her children were at the instant forgotten, and, placing the *cohuleen driuth* on her head, she plunged in.

Dick came home in the evening, and, missing his wife, he asked Kathleen, his little girl, what had become of her mother, but she could not tell him. He then inquired of the neighbours, and he learned that she was seen going towards the strand with a strange-looking thing like a cocked hat in her hand. He returned to his cabin to search for the *cohuleen driuth*. It was gone, and the truth now flashed upon him.

Year after year did Dick Fitzgerald wait expecting the return of his wife, but he never saw her more. Dick never married again, always thinking that the Merrow would sooner or later return to him, and nothing could ever persuade him but that her father the king kept her below by main force ; " for," said Dick, " she surely would not of herself give up her husband and her children."

While she was with him, she was so good a wife in every respect, that to this day she is spoken of in the tradition of the country, as the pattern for one, under the name of THE LADY OF GOLLERUS.

JOHN BANIM
1798-1842

THE STOLEN SHEEP

THE Irish plague, called typhus fever, raged in its terrors. In almost every third cabin there was a corpse daily. In every one, without an exception, there was what had made the corpse—hunger. It need not be added that there was poverty, too. The poor could not bury their dead. From mixed motives of self-protection, terror, and benevolence, those in easier circumstances exerted themselves to administer relief in different ways. Money was subscribed (then came England's munificent donation—God prosper her for it!), wholesome food, or food as wholesome as a bad season permitted, was provided; and men of respectability, bracing their minds to avert the danger that threatened themselves, by boldly facing it, entered the infected house, where death reigned almost alone, and took measures to cleanse and purify the close-cribbed air and the rough, bare walls.

In the early progress of the fever, before the more affluent roused themselves to avert its career, let us cross the threshold of an individual peasant. His young wife lies dead; his second child is dying at her side; he has just sunk into a corner himself, under the first stun of disease, long resisted. The only persons of his family who have escaped contagion, and are likely to escape it, are his old father, who sits weeping feebly upon the hob, and his first-born, a boy of three or four years who, standing between the old man's knees, cries also for food.

We visit the young peasant's abode some time after. He has not sunk under "the sickness." He is fast regaining his strength, even without proper nourishment; he can creep out of doors and sit in the sun. But in the expression of his sallow and emaciated face there is no joy for his escape from the grave, as he sits there alone, silent and brooding. His father and his surviving child are still hungry—more hungry, indeed, and more helpless than ever; for the neighbours who had relieved the family with a potato and a mug of sour milk are now stricken down themselves, and want assistance to a much greater extent than they can give it.

"I wish Mr. Evans was in the place," cogitated Michaul Carroll; "a body could spake forn'ent him, and not spake for nothin', for all that he's an Englishman; and I don't like the thoughts o' goin' up to the house to the steward's face—it wouldn't turn kind to a body. May be he'd soon come home to us, the masther himself."

Another fortnight elapsed. Michaul's hope proved vain. Mr. Evans was still in London; though a regular resident on his small Irish estate since it had come into his possession, business unfortunately—and he would have said so himself—now kept him an unusually long time absent. Thus disappointed, Michaul overcame his repugnance to appear before the "hard" steward. He only asked for work, however. There was none to be had. He turned his slow and still feeble feet into the adjacent town. It was market-day, and he took up his place among a crowd of other claimants for agricultural employment, shouldering a spade, as did each of his companions.

Many farmers came to the well-known "stannin," and hired men at his right and at his left, but no one addressed Michaul. Once or twice, indeed, touched perhaps by his sidelong looks of beseeching misery, a farmer stopped a moment before him, and glanced over his figure; but his worn and almost shaking limbs giving little promise of present vigour in the working field, worldly prudence soon conquered the humane feeling which started up towards him in the man's heart, and, with a choking in his throat, poor Michaul saw the arbiter of his fate pass on.

He walked homeward, without having broken his fast that day. "Bud, *musha*, what's the harm o' that," he said to himself; "only here's the ould father, an' *her* pet boy, the weenock, without a pyatee either. Well, *asthore*, if they can't have the pyatees, they must have betther food—that's all; ay—" he muttered, clenching his hands at his sides, and imprecating fearfully in Irish—"an' so they must."

He left his house again, and walked a good way to beg a few potatoes. He did not come back quite empty-handed. His father and his child had a meal. He ate but a few himself; and when he was about to lie down in his corner for the night, he said to the old man across the room:

"Don't be a-crying to-night, father, you and the child there; bud sleep well, and ye'll have the good break'ast afore ye in the mornin'."

" The good break'ast, *ma-bauchal* ? ¹ A-then, an' where 'ill id come from ? "

" A body promised it to me, father."

" *Avich* ! Michaul, an' sure it's fun you're making of us, now, at any rate. Bud, the good night, *a chorra*,² an' my blessin' on your head, Michaul ; an' if we keep trust in the good God, an' ax His blessin,' too, mornin' an' evenin', gettin' up an' lyin' down, He'll be a friend to us at last : that was always an' ever my word to you, poor boy, since you was at the years o' your own weenock, now fast asleep at my side ; an' it's my word to you now, *ma-bauchal* ; an' you won't forget id ; and there's one sayin' the same to you, out o' heaven, this night—herself, an' her little angel-in-glory by the hand, Michaul *a-vourneen*."

Having thus spoken in the fervent and rather exaggerated, though everyday, words of pious allusion of the Irish poor man, old Carroll soon dropped asleep, with his arms round his little grandson, both overcome by an unusually abundant meal. In the middle of the night he was awakened by a stealthy noise. Without moving, he cast his eyes round the cabin. A small window, through which the moon broke brilliantly, was open. He called to his son, but received no answer. He called again and again : all remained silent. He arose, and crept to the corner where Michaul had lain down. It was empty. He looked out through the window into the moonlight. The figure of a man appeared at a distance, just about to enter a pasture-field belonging to Mr. Evans.

The old man leaned his back against the wall of the cabin, trembling with sudden and terrible misgivings. With him the language of virtue, which we have heard him utter, was not cant. In early prosperity, in subsequent misfortunes, and in his late and present excess of wretchedness he had never swerved in practice from the spirit of his own exhortations to honesty before men, and love for, and dependence upon God, which, as he had truly said, he had constantly addressed to his son since his earliest childhood. And hitherto that son had, indeed, walked by his precepts, further assisted by a regular observance of the duties of his religion. Was he now about to turn into another path ? to bring shame on his father in his old age ? to put a stain on their family and their name, " the name that a rogue or a bould woman never bore " ? continued old Carroll, indulging in some of the pride and egotism for which an Irish peasant is, under his circumstances,

¹ My boy.

² Term of endearment.

remarkable. And then came the thought of the personal peril incurred by Michaul ; and his agitation, incurred by the feebleness of age, nearly overpowered him.

He was sitting on the floor, shivering like one in an ague fit, when he heard steps outside the house. He listened, and they ceased : but the familiar noise of an old barn door creaking on its crazy hinges came on his ear. It was now day-dawn. He dressed himself, stole out cautiously, peeped into the barn through a chink of the door, and all he had feared met full confirmation. There, indeed, sat Michaul, busily and earnestly engaged, with a frowning brow and a haggard face, in quartering the animal he had stolen from Mr. Evans's field.

The sight sickened the father—the blood on his son's hands, and all. He was barely able to keep himself from falling. A fear, if not a dislike, of the unhappy culprit also came upon him. His unconscious impulse was to re-enter their cabin unperceived, without speaking a word ; he succeeded in doing so ; and then he fastened the door again and undressed, and resumed his place beside his innocent grandson.

About an hour afterwards, Michaul came in cautiously through the still open window, and also undressed and reclined on his straw, after glancing towards his father's bed, who pretended to be asleep. At the usual time for arising, old Carroll saw him suddenly jump up, and prepare to go abroad. He spoke to him, leaning on his elbow.

" And what *hollg*¹ is on you now, *ma-bauchal* ? "

" Going for the good break'ast I promised you, father dear."

" An' who's the good Christhthan 'ill give id to us, Michaul ? "

" Oh, you'll know that soon, father : now, a good-bye "—he hurried to the door.

" A good-bye, then, Michaul ; bud, tell me, what's that on your hand ? "

" No—nothin'," stammered Michaul, changing colour, as he hastily examined the hand himself ; " nothin' is on id : what could there be ? " (Nor was there, for he had very carefully removed all evidence of guilt from his person ; and the father's question was asked upon grounds distinct from anything he then saw.)

" Well, *avich*, an' sure I didn't say anything was on it wrong ; or anything to make you look so quare, an' spake so sthrange to your father, this mornin' ;—only I'll ax you, Michaul, over agin, who has took such a sudd'n likin' to us, to send us the good break'ast ?—an'

¹ What are you about.

answer me sthraight, Michaul—what is id to be, that you call it so good ? ”

“ The good mate, father ”—he was again passing the threshold.

“ Stop ! ” cried his father ; “ stop, an’ turn fornent me. Mate ?—the good mate ?—What ’ud bring mate into our poor house, Michaul ? Tell me, I bid you again an’ again, who is to give id to you ? ”

“ Why, as I said afore, father, a body that——”

“ A body that thieved id, Michaul Carroll ! ” added the old man, as his son hesitated, walking close up to the culprit ; “ a body that thieved id, an’ no other body. Don’t think to blind me, Michaul. I am ould, to be sure ; but sense enough is left in me to look round among the neighbours, in my own mind, an’ know that none of ’em that has the will has the power to send us the mate for our break’ast, in an honest way. An’ I don’t say, outright, that you had the same thought wid me when you consented to take it from a thief—I don’t mean to say that you’d go to turn a thief’s recaiver, at this hour o’ your life, an’ afther growin’ up from a boy to a man widout bringin’ a spot o’ shame on yourself, or on your weenock, or on one of us. No ; I won’t say that. Your heart was scalded, Michaul, an’ your mind was darkened, for a start ; an’ the thought o’ getting comfort for the ould father an’ for the little son made you consent in a hurry, widout lookin’ well afore you, or widout lookin’ up to your good God.”

“ Father, father, let me alone ! don’t spake them words to me,” interrupted Michaul, sitting on a stool, and spreading his large and hard hands over his face.

“ Well, thin, an’ I won’t, *avich* ; I won’t ;—nothin’ to throuble you, sure : I didn’t mean id ;—only this, *a-vourneen*, don’t bring a mouthful o’ the bad, unlucky victuals into this cabin ; the pyatees, the wild berries o’ the bush, the wild roots o’ the arth, will be sweeter to us, Michaul ; the hunger itself will be sweeter ; an’ when we give God thanks afther our poor meal, or afther no meal at all, our hearts will be lighter, and our hopes for to-morrow sthronger, *avich-ma-chree*, than if we faisted on the fat o’ the land, but couldn’t ax a blessin’ on our faist.”

“ Well, thin, I won’t, either, father ; I won’t : an’ sure you have your way now. I’ll only go out a little while from you—to beg ; or else, as you say, to root down in the ground, with my nails, like a baste-brute, for our break’ast.”

“ My *vourneen* you are, Michaul, an’ my blessin’ on your head ; yes, to be sure, *avich*, beg, an I’ll beg wid you—sorrow a shame is in

that—no, but a good deed, Michaul, when it's done to keep us honest. So come ; we'll go among the Christthans together. Only, before we go, Michaul, my own dear son, tell me—tell one thing."

"What, father?" Michaul began to suspect.

"Never be afraid to tell me, Michaul Carroll, *ma-bauchal*? I won't—I can't be angry wid you now. You are sorry ; an' your Father in heaven forgives you, and so do I. But you know, *avich*, there would be danger in quitting the place widout hiding every scrap of anything that could tell on us."

"Tell on us! What can tell on us?" demanded Michaul ; "what's in the place to tell on us?"

"Nothin' in the cabin, I know, Michaul ; but——"

"But what, father?"

"Have you left nothing in the way, out there?" whispered the old man, pointing towards the barn.

"Out there? Where? What? What do you mean at all, now, father? Sure you know it's your ownself has kep me from as much as laying a hand on it."

"Ay, to-day-mornin' ; bud you laid a hand on it last night, *avich*, an' so——"

"*Curp-an-duoul!*" imprecated Michaul—"this is too bad, at any rate ; no, I didn't—last night—let me alone, I bid you, father."

"Come back again, Michaul," commanded old Carroll, as the son once more hurried to the door : and his words were instantly obeyed. Michaul, after a glance abroad, and a start, which the old man did not notice, paced to the middle of the floor, hanging his head and saying in a low voice, "Hushth now, father—it's time."

"No, Michaul, I will not hushth ; an it's not time ; come out with me to the barn."

"Hushth!" repeated Michaul, whispering sharply : he had glanced sideways to the square patch of strong morning sunlight on the ground of the cabin, defined there by the shape of the open door, and saw it intruded upon by the shadow of a man's bust leaning forward in an earnest posture.

"Is it in your mind to go back into your sin, Michaul, an' tell me you were not in the barn, at daybreak, the mornin'?" asked his father, still unconscious of a reason for silence.

"Arrah, hushth, ould man!" Michaul made a hasty sign towards the door, but was disregarded.

"I saw you in id," pursued old Carroll sternly: "ay, and at your work in id, too."

"What's that you're sayin', ould Peery Carroll!" demanded a well-known voice.

"Enough to hang his son," whispered Michaul to his father, as Mr. Evans's land-steward, followed by his herdsman and two policemen, entered the cabin. In a few minutes afterwards the policemen had in charge the dismembered carcase of the sheep, dug up out of the floor of the barn, and were escorting Michaul, handcuffed, to the county gaol, in the vicinity of the next town. They could find no trace of the animal's skin, though they sought attentively for it; and this seemed to disappoint them and the steward a good deal.

From the moment that they entered the cabin, till their departure, old Carroll did not speak a word. Without knowing it, as it seemed, he sat down on his straw bed, and remained staring stupidly around him, or at one or another of his visitors. When Michaul was about to leave the wretched abode, he paced quickly towards his father, and holding out his ironed hands, and turning his cheek for a kiss, said, smiling miserably, "God be wid you, father dear."

Still the old man was silent, and the prisoner and all his attendants passed out on the road. But it was then the agony of old Carroll assumed a distinctness. Uttering a fearful cry, he snatched up his still sleeping grandson, ran with the boy in his arms till he overtook Michaul; and, kneeling down before him in the dust, said:

"I ax pardon o' you, *avich*—won't you tell me I have id afore you go? An' here, I've brought little Peery for you to kiss; you forgot him, *a-vourneen*."

"No, father, I didn't," answered Michaul, as he stooped to kiss the child; an' get up, father, get up; my hands are not my own, or I wouldn't let you do that afore your son. Get up, there's nothin' for you to throuble yourself about; that is, I mean, I have nothin' to forgive you: no, but everything to be thankful for, an' to love you for; you were always an' ever the good father to me; an'——"

The many strong and bitter feelings which till now he had almost perfectly kept in, found full vent, and poor Michaul could not go on. The parting from his father, however, so different from what it had promised to be, comforted him. The old man held him in his arms and wept on his neck. They were separated with difficulty.

Peery Carroll, sitting on the roadside after he lost sight of the

prisoner, and holding his screaming grandson on his knees, thought the cup of his trials was full. By his imprudence he had fixed the proof of guilt on his own child ; that reflection was enough for him, and he could indulge it only generally. But he was yet to conceive distinctly in what dilemma he had involved himself as well as Michaul.

The policemen came back to compel his appearance before the magistrate ; and when the little child had been disposed of in a neighbouring cabin, he understood, to his consternation and horror, that he was to be the chief witness against the sheep-stealer. Mr. Evans's steward knew well the meaning of the words he had overheard him say in the cabin, and that if compelled to swear all he was aware of, no doubt would exist of the criminality of Michaul in the eyes of a jury.

" 'Tis a strange thing to ax a father to do," muttered Peery, more than once, as he proceeded to the magistrate's ; " it's a very strange thing."

The magistrate proved to be a humane man. Notwithstanding the zeal of the steward and the policemen, he committed Michaul for trial, without continuing to press the hesitating and bewildered old Peery into any detailed evidence ; his nature seemed to rise against the task, and he said to the steward :

" I have enough of facts for making out a committal ; if you think the father will be necessary on the trial, subpoena him."

The steward objected that Peery would abscond, and demanded to have him bound over to prosecute, on two sureties, solvent and respectable. The magistrate assented ; Peery could name no bail ; and consequently he also was marched to prison, though prohibited from holding the least intercourse with Michaul.

The assizes soon came on. Michaul was arraigned ; and, during his plea of " not guilty," his father appeared, unseen by him, in the gaoler's custody, at the back of the dock, or rather in an inner dock. The trial excited a keen and painful interest in the court, the bar, the jury-box, and the crowds of spectators. It was universally known that a son had stolen a sheep, partly to feed a starving father ; and that out of the mouth of that father it was now sought to condemn him.

" What will the old man do ? " was the general question which ran through the assembly : and while few of the lower orders could contemplate the possibility of his swearing to the truth, many of their betters scarcely hesitated to make out for him a case of natural necessity to swear falsely.

The trial began. The first witness, the herdsman, proved the loss of the sheep and the finding the dismembered carcass in the old barn. The policemen and the steward followed to the same effect, and the latter added the allusions which he had heard the father make to the son upon the morning of the arrest of the latter. The steward went down from the table. There was a pause, and complete silence, which the attorney for the prosecution broke by saying to the crier deliberately, "Call Peery Carroll."

"Here, sir," immediately answered Peery, as the gaoler led him by a side door out of the back dock to the table. The prisoner started round; but the new witness against him had passed for an instant into the crowd.

The next instant old Peery was seen ascending the table, assisted by the gaoler and by many other commiserating hands, near him. Every glance fixed on his face. The barristers looked wistfully up from their seats round the table; the judge put a glass to his eye and seemed to study his features attentively. Among the audience there ran a low but expressive murmur of pity and interest.

Though much emaciated by confinement, anguish, and suspense, Peery's cheeks had a flush, and his weak blue eyes glittered. The half-gaping expression of his parched and haggard lips was miserable to see. And yet he did not tremble much, nor appear so confounded as upon the day of his visit to the magistrate.

The moment he stood upright on the table he turned himself fully to the judge, without a glance towards the dock.

"Sit down, sit down, poor man," said the judge.

"Thanks to you, my lord, I will," answered Peery, "only, first I'd ax you to let me kneel, for a little start"; and he accordingly did kneel, and after bowing his head, and forming the sign of the cross on his forehead, he looked up, and said, "My Judge in heaven above, 'tis you I pray to keep me to my duty, afore my earthly judge, this day—amen"—and then, repeating the sign of the cross, he seated himself.

The examination of the witness commenced, and humanely proceeded as follows—the counsel for the prosecution taking no notice of the superfluity of Peery's answers.

"Do you know Michaul, or Michael, Carroll, the prisoner at the bar?"

"Afore that night, sir, I believed I knew him well; every thought of his mind, every bit of the heart in his body: afore that night, no living creatur could throw a word at Michaul Carrol, or say he ever

forgot his father's renown, or his love of his good God ; an' sure the people are afther telling you by this time how it came about that night—an' you, my lord—an' ye, gintlemen—an' all good Christhthans that hear me ;—here I am to help to hang him—my own boy, and my only one—but, for all that, gintlemen, ye ought to think of it ; 'twas for the weenock and the ould father that he done it ;—indeed, an'deed, we hadn't a pyatee in the place ; an' the sickness was among us, a start afore ; it took the wife from him, and another babby ; an' id had himself down, a week or so beforehand ; an' all that day he was looking for work, but couldn't get a hand's turn to do ; an' that's the way it was ; not a mouthful for me an' little Peery ; an', more betoken, he grew sorry for id, in the mornin,' an' promised me not to touch a scrap of what was in the barn,—ay, long afore the steward and the peelers came on us,—but was willin' to go among the neighbours an' beg our breakfast, along wid myself, from door to door, sooner than touch it."

" It is my painful duty," resumed the barrister, when Peery would at length cease, " to ask you for closer information. You saw Michael Carrol in the barn that night ? "

" *Musha*—The Lord pity him and me—I did, sir."

" Doing what ? "

" The sheep between his hands," answered Peery, dropping his head, and speaking almost inaudibly.

" I must still give you pain, I fear ; stand up, take the crier's rod, and if you see Michael Carrol in court lay it on his head."

" *Och, musha, musha*, sir, don't ax me to do that ! " pleaded Peery, rising, wringing his hands, and for the first time weeping—" och, don't, my lord, don't, and may your own judgment be favourable, the last day "

" I am sorry to command you to do it, witness, but you must take the rod," answered the judge, bending his head close to his notes, to hide his own tears ; and, at the same time, many a veteran barrister rested his forehead on the edge of the table. In the body of the court were heard sobs.

" Michaul, *avich* ! Michaul, *a corra-ma-chree* ! " exclaimed Peery, when at length he took the rod, and faced round to his son, " is id your father they make to do it, *ma-bauchal* ? "

" My father does what is right," answered Michael, in Irish.

The judge immediately asked to have his words translated ; and when he learned their import, regarded the prisoner with satisfaction.

"We rest here, my lord," said the counsel, with the air of a man freed from a painful task. The judge instantly turned to the jury-box :

"Gentlemen of the jury, that the prisoner at the bar stole the sheep in question, there can be no shade of moral doubt. But you have a very peculiar case to consider. A son steals a sheep that his own famishing father and his own famishing son may have food. His aged parent is compelled to give evidence against him here for the act. The old man virtuously tells the truth, and the whole truth, before you and me. He sacrifices his natural feelings—and we have seen that they are lively—to his honesty, and to his religious sense of the sacred obligations of an oath. Gentlemen, I will pause to observe that the old man's conduct is strikingly exemplary, and even noble. It teaches all of us a lesson. Gentlemen, it is not within the province of a judge to censure the rigour of the proceedings which have sent him before us. But I venture to anticipate your pleasure that, notwithstanding all the evidence given, you will be enabled to acquit that old man's son, the prisoner at the bar. I have said there cannot be the shade of a moral doubt that he has stolen the sheep, and I repeat the words. But, gentlemen, there is a legal doubt, to the full benefit of which he is entitled. The sheep has not been identified. The herdsman could not venture to identify it (and it would have been strange if he could) from the dismembered limbs found in the barn. To his mark on its skin, indeed, he might have positively spoken ; but no skin has been discovered. Therefore, according to the evidence, and you have sworn to decide by that alone, the prisoner is entitled to your acquittal. Possibly, now that the prosecutor sees the case in its full bearing, he may be pleased with this result."

While the jury, in evident satisfaction, prepared to return their verdict, Mr. Evans, who had but a moment before returned home, entered the court, and becoming aware of the concluding words of the judge, expressed his sorrow aloud that the prosecution had ever been undertaken, that circumstances had kept him uninformed of it, though it had gone on in his name ; and he begged leave to assure his lordship that it would be his future effort to keep Michaul Carroll in his former path of honesty, by finding him honest and ample employment, and, as far as in him lay, to reward the virtue of the old father.

While Peery Carroll was laughing and crying in a breath, in the arms of his delivered son, a subscription, commenced by the bar, was mounting into a considerable sum for his advantage.

THE CHURCHYARD WATCH

JOHN BANIM

THE dead are watched lest the living should prey on them !— 'Tis a strange alliance—of the living with DEATH—that his kingdom and sovereignty may remain untrenched upon. In different parts of England we have seen watch-houses, almost entirely composed of glass, built in lonesome churchyards, of which generally the parish sexton, and perhaps his dog (ill-fated among men and dogs !), are the appointed nightly tenants, with liberty, ceded or taken, to leave their dull lamp in the watch-box, and roam, here and there, at their pleasure, among the graves, until daylight.

What stern necessities man forces upon man ! There can scarce be a more comfortless lot, or, making allowance for the almost inborn shudderings of the human heart, a more appalling one, than that of the poor grave-scooper or bell-puller who is thus doomed to spend his nights summer and winter. Habit, indeed, may eventually blunt the first keenness of his aversion, if not terror : he may serve a due apprenticeship to horrors, and learn his trade. After a thousand secret and unowned struggles to seem brave and indifferent, he may at last grow callously courageous. His flesh may cease to creep as he strides on, in his accustomed round, over the abodes of the silent and mouldering, and hears his own dull footstep echoed through the frequent dreary hollowness beneath.

But what has he gained, now, beyond the facility of earning his wretched crust for himself and his crying infants !—We have seen and spoken with such an unhappy being, who seemed to have lost, in the struggle which conquered nature's especial antipathy (nature in a breast and mind, like his, at least), most of the other sympathies of his kind. He had a heavy, ox-like expression of face ; he would scarce speak to his neighbours (although *we* contrived to make him eloquent) when they passed him at his door, or in the village street ; his own children feared or disliked him, and did not smile nor whisper in his presence.

We have watched him go into the churchyard, at his usual hour, after nightfall ; and as he began to stalk about there, the ghastly

sentinel of the dead, he appeared to be in closer fellowship with them than with the fair existence which he scarce more than nominally shared. It was said, indeed, that, upon his initiation, at a tender age and under peculiar circumstances, into his profession of churchyard watchman, temporary delirium prepared him for its regular and steady pursuit ever since ; and that, although he showed no symptoms of distinct insanity, when we knew him, the early visitation had left a gloom on his mind, and a thick, nerveless insensibility in his heart, which then, at forty-five, formed his character.

In fact we learned a good deal about him, for every one talked of him—and, as has been hinted, much of that good deal from himself, to say nothing of his wife, in his absence ; and if he did not deliberately invent fables of his past trials, for the purpose of gratifying a little spirit of mockery of our undisguised interest, as mad as the maddest bedlamite he must have been upon the occasion alluded to : nay, to recount, with a grave face (as he did), the particulars of the delusions of his time of delirium, did not argue him a very sound-minded man at the moment he gave us his confidence.

We are about to tell his story, at length, in our own way, however ; that is, we shall try to model into our own language (particularly the raving parts) what his neighbours, his spouse, and his own slow-moving and heavy lips have, from time to time, supplied us with.

He was the only child of an affectionate and gentle-mannered father who died when he was little more than a boy, leaving him sickly and pining. His mother wept a month, mourned three months more—and was no longer a widow. Her second husband proved a surly fellow, who married her little fortune rather than herself, as the means of keeping his quart pot filled, almost from morning to night, at the village Tap, where he played good fellow and politician to the expressed admiration of all his companions.

He had long been the parish sexton, and took up his post, night after night, in the churchyard. Little fear had he of what he might see there ; or he had outgrown his fears ; or, if he thought or felt of the matter, the lonely debauch which he was known to make in that strange banquet-place served to drug him into obliviousness. He deemed his duty—or he said and swore he did—only a tiresome and slavish one, and hated it just as he hated daily labour. And—as he declared and harangued at the Tap—he had long ago forsworn it, only that it paid him well ; but now that his marriage made his circum-

stances easier, he was determined to drink alone in the churchyard no longer : and he fed an idle, useless lad at home, who with his dog—as idle as he—roamed and loitered about, here and there, and had never yet done a single thing to earn their bread.

But it was full time that both were taught the blessings of industry ; and he would teach them ;—and—now that he thought of it—why should not Will take his place in the watch-box, and so keep the shillings in the family ? His friends praised his views, one and all, and he grew thrice resolved.

Returned the next morning from his nocturnal charge, he reeled to bed in solemn, drunken determination. He arose, towards evening, only half-reclaimed by sleep to ordinary sense, and set about his work of reformation. He ate his meal in silence, turned from the table to the fire without a word, looked at the blaze, grimly contemplative, then grumbling suddenly at his wife :

“ And where is that truant now ? ” he asked : “ down by the marshes with his cur, I suppose ; or gone a-nutting, or lying stretched in the sun, the two idlers together ; what !—and must I work and work, and strive and strive—I, I, for ever—and will he never lend me a hand ? go where he likes, do what he likes, and laugh and fatten on my labour ? ”

“ Master Hunks,” said the wife, “ Will is sickly, and won’t fatten on either your labour or mine—not to talk of his own ;—you know ’tis a puny lad, and wants some favour yet awhile ; with God’s help and ours he may be stronger soon.”

Will and dog here came in. From what followed, this evening, it will be seen that the ill-fated lad promised, in early youth, to be of an open, kindly, intelligent character, very different indeed from that in which we found him husked up at five-and-forty.

He saluted his stepfather, and sat down quietly near the fire. His poor dumb companion—friend of his boyhood, and his father’s gift—coiled himself up before the blaze, and prepared to surrender his senses to happy sleep, interspersed with dreams of all the sports he had enjoyed with his master that day.

Hunks, his eye glancing from one object of dislike to the other, kicked the harmless brute, who jumped up, yelping in pain and bitter lamentation, and ran for shelter under Will’s chair. Will’s pale cheek broke out into colour, his weak eye sparkled, his feeble voice arose shrilly, and he asked—“ Why is my poor dog beaten ? ”

"The lazy cur!" said Hunks—"he was in my way, and only got paid for idleness."

"'Twas ill done," resumed Will—"he was my father's dog, and my father gave him to me; and if my father were alive and well, he would not hurt him, nor see him hurt!" Tears interrupted this sudden fit of spirit.

"Cur, as much as he is!" retorted Hunks—"do you put upon me, here at my own fireside? You are the idler—you—and he only learns of you—and I hadn't ought to have served him out, and you so near me."

"It has been God's will," said the boy, "to keep my strength from me."

"Be silent and hear me!" roared Hunks—"this is your life, I say—playing truant for ever—and what is mine and your own good mother's here?"

"Master Hunks," pleaded the wife—"God knows I don't grudge nothing I can do for my poor Will's sake."

"And you—not a word from you either, Missis!" grunted Hunks—"I am put upon by one and t'other of you—ye sleep in comfort every night, and leave me to go a-watching, out o' doors, there, in all weathers; but stop a bit, my man, it sha'n't be this way much longer; I'll have my natural rest in my bed, some time or other, and soon; and you must earn it for me."

"How, father? how can I earn it?" asked Will—"I would if I could—but how? I haven't learnt no trade, and you know as well as any one knows it, I am not able to work in the fields or on the roads or get my living any one way."

"Then you can sit still and watch—that's light work," muttered Hunks.

"Watch!" cried mother and son together—"watch what? and where? or whom?"

"The dead folk in the churchyard."

"Heaven defend me from it!" cried poor Will, clasping his hands and falling back in his chair.

"Ay, and this very night," continued the despot—"this very night you shall mount guard in my place, and I shall have my lawful sleep, what the whole parish cries shame on me for not having months ago."

"Master Hunks, 'twill kill the boy!" cried the mother.

"Missis—don't you go for to cross me so often!"—remonstrated

her husband with a fixed look, which, short as they had been one flesh, she had reason to understand and shrink at.—“Come, my man, stir yourself; 'tis time you were at the gate; the church clock has struck; *they will expect us*”—he interrupted himself in a great rage, and with a great oath—“but here I keep talking, and the cur never minds a word I say!—Come along!”

“Don't lay hands on him!” screamed the mother as he strode towards the boy—“what I have often told you has come to pass, Master Hunks—you have killed him!”

Hunks scoffed at the notion, although, indeed, Will's hands had fallen helplessly at his side, and his chin rested on his breast, while his eyes were closed, and his lips apart. But he had only become insensible from sheer terror acting on a weak frame. Sighs and groans soon gave notice of returning animation. His mother then earnestly besought their tyrant to go on his night's duty, and, at least till the following night, leave her son to her care. Half in fear of having to answer for a murder, incredulously as he pretended to speak, Hunks turned out of the house, growling and threatening.

“Is he gone?” asked Will, when he regained his senses—“gone not to come back?”—and having heard his mother's gentle assurances, he let his head fall on her shoulder, weeping while he continued:

“Mother, mother, it would destroy the little life I have! I could not bear it for an hour! The dread I am in of it was born with me! When I was a child of four years I had dreams of it, and I remember them to this day; they used to come in such crowds round my cradle! As I grew up you saw and you know my weakness. I could never sit still in the dark, nor even in the daylight out of doors in lonesome places. Now in my youth—a lad—almost a man—I am ashamed to speak of my inward troubles. Mother, you do not know me—I do not know myself! I walk out sometimes down by the river, and, listening to the noise of the water over the rocks, where it is shallow, and to the rustling of the trees as they nod in the twilight, voices and shrieks come round me—sometimes they break in my ears—and I have turned to see what thing it was that spoke, and thought some grey tree at my side had only just changed and become motionless, and seemed as if a moment before, it had been something else, and had a tongue, and said the words that frightened me!—Oh, it was but yester evening I ran home from the river-side, and felt no heart within me till I had come in here to the fireside, and seen you moving near me!

" You know the lone house all in ruins upon the hill—I fear it, mother, more than my tongue can tell you ! I have been taken through it, in my dreams, in terrible company, and here I could describe to you its bleak apartments, one by one—its vaults, pitch dark, and half-filled with stones and rubbish, and choked up with weeds—its winding, creeping staircases, and its flapping windows—I know them all, though my feet never yet crossed its threshold !—Never, mother—though I have gone near it, to enter it, and see if what I had dreamt of it was true—and I went in the first light of the morning ; but when close by the old doorway, the rustle of the shrubs and weeds startled me, and I thought—but sure *that* was fancy—that some one called me in by name—and then I turned and raced down the hill, never looking back till I came to the meadow-ground where cows and sheep are always grazing, and heard the dogs barking in the town, and voices of the children at play ! "

" Will, my king," said his mother soothingly, " this is all mere childishness at your years. God is above us and around us ; and even if evil and strange things are allowed to be on earth, He will shield us from all harm. Arouse up like a man ; for, indeed, your time of boyhood is passing—nay, it has passed with other lads not much older ; only you have been poorly and weakly from your cradle, Will. Come, go to sleep ; and before you lie down, pray for better health and strength to-morrow."

" To-morrow ! " he repeated—" and did my stepfather say anything of to-morrow ? "

His mother answered him evasively, and he resumed,— " Oh, how I fear to-morrow !—oh, mother, you have loved me, and you do love me—for my weakness, my ill-health,—and my dutifulness—and you loved my father—oh, for his sake as well as mine, mother, keep me from what I am threatened with !—keep me from it, if you would keep me alive another day ! "

He went into his little sleeping apartment, stricken to the very soul with supernatural fears.

After spending a miserable night, he stole out of the house next morning and wandered about the private walks adjacent to the town until he thought his stepfather might have arisen and taken his usual walk to the Tap. But as the lad was about to re-enter the house, Hunks met him at the threshold. Will shrunk back ; to his surprise and comfort, however, his fears now seemed ill-founded. The man bade

him good-morrow in as cheerful and kind a tone as he could command, shook his hand, tapped him on the head, and left the house. Delighted, though still agitated, Will sought his mother within doors, told her his good omens, and spent a happy day. At dinner, too, notwithstanding Hunks' presence, the mother and son enjoyed themselves, so amiable had the despot become, at least in appearance.

When their meal was over, Hunks, as if to attain the height of civility, invited Will to go out with him for a walk by the river—"and let's have Barker (Will's dog) for company," continued Hunks; "he may show us sport with a rat, or such like, Will."

Accordingly, the three strolled out together, Will leading the way by many a well-known sedge or tuft of bushes, or undermined bank, the resorts of the water-rat, and sometimes of the outlaw otter; and Barker upheld his character, by starting, hunting down, and killing one of the first-mentioned animals. As twilight came on, they turned their faces towards the little town. They entered it. Its little hum of life was now hushed; its streets were silent, and almost deserted; its doors and windows barred and bolted, and the sounds of the rushing river and the thumping mill were the only ones which filled the air. The clock pealed ten as they continued their way. Hunks had grown suddenly silent and reserved. They passed the old Gothic church, and now were passing the gate which led into its burial-ground. Hunks stopped short. His grey, bad eye fell on the lad—"Will," he said, "I be thinking we've walked enough for this time."

"Enough, indeed,—and thank you for your company—and good-night, father," answered Will, trying to smile, though he began to tremble.

"Good-night then, my man—and here be your watch-light,"—and Hunks drew a dark lantern from his huge pocket.

"Nay, I want no light home," said Will; "I know the way so well; and 'tis not very dark; and you know you can't do without it on your post."

"My post?" Hunks laughed villainously—"your post, you mean, Will; take it; I be thinking I shall sleep sound to-night without a dead-light—as if I were a corpse to need it. Come along."

"You cannot have the heart to ask me!" cried Will, stepping back.

"Pho, my man"—Hunks clutched him by the shoulder with one hand, with the other unlocked the gate and flung it open—"In with

you ; you'll like it so in a few nights, you'll wish no better post ; the dead chaps be civil enough ; only treat them well, and let them walk awhile, and they make very good company." He dragged Will closer to the gate.

"Have mercy !" shrieked the wretched lad, trying to kneel, "or kill me first, father, to make me company for them, if that will please you."

"Get in !" roared the savage—"get in !—ay, hollo out, and twist about, so, and I'll pitch your shivering carcass half-way across the churchyard !"—he forced him in from the gate—"stop a bit, now—there be your lantern"—he set it down on a tombstone—"so, good-night—yonder's your box—just another word—don't you be caught strolling too near the murderer's corner over there, or you may trip and fall among the things that turn and twine on the ground, like roots of trees, to guard him."

With a new and piercing shriek, Will clung close to his fell tormentor. Hunks, partially carrying into effect a threat he had uttered, tore the lad's hands away, tossed him to some distance, strode out at the gate, locked it, and Will was alone with horror.

At first an anguish of fear kept him stupefied and stationary. He had fallen on a freshly-piled grave, to which mechanically his fingers clung and his face joined, in avoidance of the scene around. But he soon recollected what clay it was he clung to, and at the thought he started up, and, hushed as the sleepers around him, made some observations. High walls quite surrounded the churchyard, as if to part him from the habitable world. His lamp was burning upon the tombstone where Hunks had placed it—one dim red spot amid the thick darkness. The church clock now tolled eleven. It ceased ; his ears ached in the resumed silence, and he listened and stared about him for what he feared. Whispers seemed to arise near him. He ran for his lamp, snatched it up, and instinctively hurried to the watch-box. Oh, he wished it made of solid rock !—it was chiefly framed of glass, useless as the common air to his terrors ! He shut his eyes and pressed his palms upon them—vain subterfuge ! The fevered spirit within him brought before his mind's vision worse things than the churchyard could yawn up, were all that superstition has fancied of it true. He looked out from his watch-box in refuge from himself.

That evening a half-moon had risen early, and, at this moment, was sinking in gathering clouds behind distant hills. As he vaguely

noticed the circumstance, he felt more and more desolate. Simultaneously with the disappearance of the planet, the near clock began again to strike—he knew what hour! Each stroke smote his ear as if it would crack the nerve; at the last he shrieked out delirious! He had a pause from agony, then a struggle for departing reason, and then he was at rest.

At daybreak his stepfather found him asleep. He led him home. Will sat down to breakfast, smiling, but did not speak a word. Often during the day his now brilliant eye turned to the west; but why, his mother could not tell; until, as the evening made up her couch of clouds there, drawing around her the twilight for drapery, he left the house with an unusually vigorous step, and stood at the gate of the churchyard. Again he took up his post. Again the hour of twelve pealed from the old church, but now he did not fear it. When it had fully sounded he clapped his hands, laughed, and shouted.

The imaginary whispers he had heard the previous night—small, cautious whispers—came round him again, first from a distance, then nearer and nearer. At last he shaped them into words:

“Let us walk,” they said—“though he watches us, he fears us.” *He!*—’twas strange to hear the dim dead speak to a living man of himself! the maniac laughed again at the fancy, and replied to them:

“Ay, come! appear! I give leave for it. Ye are about in crowds, I know, not yet daring to take up your old bodies till I please; but, up with them!—Graves, split on, and yield me my subjects! for am I not king of the churchyard? Obey me!—ay, now your mouths gape—and what a yawning!—are ye musical, too?—a jubilee of groans!—out with it, in the name of Death!—blast it about like giants carousing!”

“Well blown!—and now a thousand heads popped up at once—their eyes fixed on mine, as if to ask my further leave for a resurrection; and they know I am good-humoured now, and grow upward, accordingly, like a grove of bare trees that have no sap in them. And now they move; passing along in rows, like trees, too, that glide by one on a bank, while one sails merrily down the river—and all stark staring still: and others stand bolt upright against their own headstones to contemplate. I wonder what they think of! Move! move! young, old, boys, men, pale girls, and palsied grandmothers—my churchyard can never hold ’em! And yet how they pass each other from corner to corner! I think they make way through one another’s bodies, as they do in the grave. They’ll dance anon. Minuets, at least. Why, they

begin already!—and what partners!—a tall, genteel young officer takes out our village witch of the wield—she that died at Christmas—and our last rector smirks to a girl of fifteen—ha, ha! yon tattered little fellow is a radical, making a leg to the old duchess!—music! music!—Go, some of you that look on there, and toll the dead bell! Well done! they tie the murderer to the bell-rope by the neck (though he was hanged before), and the bell swings out merrily! but what face is here? ”

It was the vision of a child's face, which he believed he caught staring at him through the glass of his watch-box—the face of an only brother who had died young. The wretch's laughter changed into tears and low wailings. By the time that his mother came to seek him, just at daybreak, he was, however, again laughing; but in such a state as to frighten mirth from her heart and lips till the day she died. As has been said, symptoms of positive insanity did not long continue to appear in his words or actions; yet when he recovered, there was still a change in him—a dark and disagreeable change, under the inveterate confirmation of which, the curious student of human nature may, at this moment, observe him in his native village.

GERALD GRIFFIN

1808-1840

THE DILEMMA OF PHADRIG

"**T**HERE'S no use in talken about it, Phadrig. I know an I feel that all's over wit me. My pains are all gone, to be sure—but in place o' that, there's a weight like a quern stone down upon my heart, an I feel it blackenen within me. All I have to say is—think o' your own Mauria when she's gone, an be kind to poor Patcy."

"Ah, darlen, don't talk that way—there's hopes yet—what'll I do, what'll the child do witout you?"——

"Phadrig, there's noan. I'm goen fast, an if you have any regard for me, you won't say anythin that'll bring the thoughts o' you an him between me an the thoughts o' heaven, for that's what I must think of now. An if you marry again——"

"Oh, Mauria, honey, will you kill me entirely? Is it *I'll* marry again?"

——"If it be a thing you should marry again," Mauria resumed, without taking any notice of her husband's interruption, "you'll bear in mind that the best mother that ever walked the ground will love her own above another's. It stands with raisin an natur. The gander abroad will pull a strange goslen out of his own flock; and you know yourself, we could never get the bracket hen to sit upon Nelly O'Leary's chickens, do what we could. Everything loves its own. Then, Phadrig, if you see the floury potaties—an the top o' the milk—an the warm seat be the hob—an the biggest bit o' meat on a Sunday goen away from Patcy—you'll think o' your poor Mauria, an do her part by him; just quietly, and softly, an without blamen the woman—for it is only what's nait'el, an what many a stepmother does without thinking o' themselves. An above all things, Phadrig, take care to make him mind his books and his religion, to keep out o' bad company, an study his readin-made-aisy, and that's the way he'll be a blessing an a comfort to you in your old days, as I once thought he would be to me in mine."

Here her husband renewed his promises in a tone of deep affliction.

" An now for yourself, Phadrig. Remember the charge that's upon you, and don't be goen out venturen your life in a little canvas canoe, on the bad autumn days, at Ballybunion ; nor wit foolish boys at the Glin and Tarbert fairs ; —an don't be so wake-minded as to be trusten to card-drawers, an fairy doctors, an the like ; for it's the last word the priest said to me was, that you were too superstitious, and that's a great shame an a heavy sin. But tee you ! ¹ Phadrig, dear, there's that rogue of a pig at the potatoes over——"

Phadrig turned out the grunting intruder, bolted the hurdle-door, and returned to the bedside of his expiring helpmate. That tidy housekeeper, however, exhausted by the exertion which she had made to preserve, from the mastication of the swinish tusk, the fair produce of her husband's conacre of white-eyes, had fallen back on the pillow and breathed her last.

Great was the grief of the widowed Phadrig for her loss—great were the lamentations of her female friends at the evening wake—and great was the jug of whisky-punch which the mourners imbibed at the mouth, in order to supply the loss of fluid which was expended from the eyes. According to the usual cottage etiquette, the mother of the deceased, who acted as mistress of the ceremonies, occupied a capacious hay-bottomed chair near the fireplace—from which she only rose when courtesy called on her to join each of her female acquaintances as they arrived, in the death-wail which (as in politeness bound) they poured forth over the pale piece of earth that lay confined in the centre of the room. This mark of attention, however, the old lady was observed to omit with regard to one of the fair guests—a round-faced, middle-aged woman, called Milly Rue—or Red Milly, probably because her head might have furnished a solution of the popular conundrum, " Why is a red-haired lady like a sentinel on his post ? "

The fair Milly, however, did not appear to resent this slight, which was occasioned (so the whisper went among the guests) by the fact that she had been an old and neglected love of the new widower. All the fiery ingredients in Milly's constitution appeared to be comprehended in her glowing ringlets—and those, report says, were as ardent in hue as their owner was calm and regulated in her temper. It would be a cold morning, indeed, that a sight of Milly's head would not warm you—and a hot fit of anger which a few tones of her kind and wrath-disarming voice would not cool. She dropped, after she had con-

¹ To you ! Beware !

cluded her "cry," a conciliating curtsey to the sullen old lady, took an unobtrusive seat at the foot of the bed, talked of the "notable" qualities of the deceased, and was particularly attentive to the flaxen-headed little Patcy, whom she held in her lap during the whole night, cross-examining him in his reading and multiplication, and presenting him, at parting, in token of her satisfaction at his proficiency, with a copy of *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, with a fine marble cover and pictures. Milly acted in this instance under the advice of a prudent mother, who exhorted her, "whenever she thought o' maken presents, that way, not to be layen her money out in cakes or gingerbread, or things that would be ett off at wanst, an no more about them or the giver—but to give a strong toy, or a book, or somethen that would last, and bring her to mind now and then, so as that when a person 'ud ask where they got that, or who gev it, they'd say, 'from Milly Rue,' or 'Milly gev it, we're obleest to her,' an be talken an thinken of her when she'd be away."

To curb in my tale, which may otherwise become restive and unmanageable—Milly's deep affliction and generous sympathy made a serious impression on the mind of the widower, who more than all was touched by that singularly accidental attachment which she seemed to have conceived for little Patcy. Nothing could be farther from his own wishes than any design of a second time changing his condition; but he felt that it would be doing a grievous wrong to the memory of his first wife if he neglected this opportunity of providing her favourite Patcy with a protector, so well calculated to supply her place. He demurred a little on the score of true love, and the violence which he was about to do his own constant heart—but like the bluff King Henry, his conscience—"aye—his conscience,"—touched him, and the issue was that a roaring wedding shook the walls which had echoed to the wail of death within the few preceding months.

Milly Rue not only supplied the place of a mother to young Patcy, but presented him in the course of a few years with two merry play-fellows, a brother and a sister. To do her handsome justice, too, poor Mauria's anticipations were completely disproved by her conduct, and it would have been impossible for a stranger to have detected the stepson of the house from any shade of undue partiality in the mother. The harmony in which they dwelt was unbroken by any accident for many years.

The first shock which burst in with a sudden violence upon their

happiness was one of a direful nature. Disease, that pale and hungry fiend who haunts alike the abodes of wealth and of penury ; who brushes away with his baleful wing the bloom from beauty's cheek, and the balm of slumber from the pillow of age ; who troubles the hope of the young mother with dreams of ghastliness and gloom, and fears that come suddenly, she knows not why nor whence ; who sheds his poisonous dews alike on the heart that is buoyant and the heart that is broken ; this stern and conquering demon scorned not to knock, one summer morning, at the door of Phadrig's cow-house, and to lay his iron fingers upon a fine milch-cow, a sheeted-stripper which constituted (to use his own emphatic phrase) the poor farmer's " substance," and to which he might have applied the well-known lines which run nearly as follows :

She's straight in her back, and thin in her tail ;
She's fine in her horn, and good at the pail ;
She's calm in her eyes, and soft in her skin ;
She's a grazier's without, and a butcher's within.

All the " cures " in the pharmacopoeia of the village apothecary were expended on the poor animal, without any beneficial effect ; and Phadrig, after many conscientious qualms about the dying words of his first wife, resolved to have recourse to that infallible refuge in such cases—a fairy doctor.

He said nothing to the afflicted Milly about his intention, but slipped out of the cottage in the afternoon, hurried to the Shannon side near Money Point, unmoored his light canvas-built canoe, seated himself in the frail vessel, and fixing his paddles on the *towl-pin*, sped away over the calm face of the waters towards the isle of Scattery, where the renowned Crohoore-na-Oona, or Connor-of-the-Sheep, the Mohammed of the cottages, at this time took up his residence. This mysterious personage, whose prophecies are still commented on among the cottage circles with looks of deep awe and wonder, was much revered by his contemporaries as a man " who had seen a dale " ; of what nature those sights or visions were was intimated by a mysterious look, and a solemn nod of the head.

In a little time Phadrig ran his little canoe aground on the sandy beach of Scattery, and, drawing her above high-water mark, proceeded to the humble dwelling of the gifted Sheep-shearer with feelings of profound fear and anxiety. He passed the lofty round tower—the ruined grave of St. Senanus, in the centre of the little isle—the moulder-

ing church, on which the eye of the poring antiquary may still discern the sculptured image of the two-headed monster, with which cottage tradition says the saint sustained so fierce a conflict on landing in the islet—and which the translator of Odranus has vividly described as “a dragon, with his fore-part covered with huge bristles, standing on end like those of a boar ; his mouth gaping wide open with a double row of crooked, sharp tusks, and with such openings that his entrails might be seen ; his back like a round island, full of scales and shells ; his legs short and hairy, with such steely talons, that the pebble-stones, as he ran along them, sparkled—parching the way wherever he went, and making the sea boil about him where he dived—such was his excessive fiery heat.” Phadrig’s knees shook beneath him when he remembered this awful description—and thought of the legends of Lough Dhoola, on the summit of Mount Callon, to which the hideous animal was banished by the saint, to fast on a trout and a half per diem to the end of time ; and where, to this day, the neighbouring fishermen declare that, in dragging the lake with their nets, they find the half trout as regularly divided in the centre as if it were done with a knife and scale.

While Phadrig remained with mouth and eyes almost as wide open as those of the sculptured image of the monster which had fascinated him to the spot, a sudden crash among the stones and dock-weed in an opposite corner of the ruin made him start and yell as if the original were about to quit Lough Dhoola on parole of honour, and use him as a relish after the trout and a half. The noise was occasioned by a little rotund personage, who had sprung from the mouldering wall, and now stood gazing fixedly on the terrified Phadrig, who continued returning that steady glance with a half-frightened, half-crying face—one hand fast clenched upon his breast, and the other extended, with an action of avoidance and deprecation. The person of the stranger was stout and short, rendered still more so by a stoop, which might almost have been taken for a hump—his arms hung forward from his shoulders, like those of a long-armed ape—his hair was grey and bushy, like that of a wanderer—and his sullen grey eye seemed to be inflamed with ill-humour—his feet were bare and as broad as a camel’s—and a leathern girdle buckling round his waist secured a tattered grey frieze riding-coat, and held an enormous pair of shears, which might have clipped off a man’s head as readily, perhaps, as a lock of wool. This last article of costume afforded a sufficient indication to Phadrig that he stood in the presence of the awful object of his search.

" Well ! an who are *you* ? " growled the Sheep-shearer, after surveying Phadrig attentively for some moments.

The first gruff sound of his voice made the latter renew his start and roar for fright ; after which, composing his terrors as well as he might, he replied, in the words of Autolycus, " I am only a poor fellow, sir."

" Well ! an what's your business with me ? "

" A cure, sir, I wanted for her. A cow o' mine that's very bad inwardly, an we can do nothen for her ; an I thought may be you'd know what is it ail'ded her—an prevail on *THEM* " (this word was pronounced with an emphasis of deep meaning) " to leave her to uz."

" Huth ! " the Sheep-shearer thundered out, in a tone that made poor Phadrig jump six feet backwards with a fresh yell, " do you daare to spake of *them* before me. Go along ! you villyan o' the airth, an wait for me outside the church, an I'll tell you all about it there ; but, first—do you think I can get the *gentlemen* to do anything for me *gratish*—without offeren 'em a trate or a haip'orth ? "

" If their honours wouldn't think two tin-pennies and a fi'penny bit too little.—It's all I'm worth in the wide world."

" Well ! we'll see what they'll say to it. Give it here to me. Go now—be off with yourself—if you don't want to have 'em all a-top o' you in a minnit."

This last hint made our hero scamper over the stones like a startled fawn ; nor did he think himself safe until he reached the spot where he had left his canoe, and where he expected the coming of the Sheep-shearer ; conscience-struck by the breach of his promise to his dying Mauria, and in a state of agonising anxiety with respect to the lowing patient in the cow-house.

He was soon after rejoined by Connor-of-the-Sheep.

" There is one way," said he, " of saving your cow—but you must lose one of your childer if you wish to save it."

" O Heaven presarve uz, sir, how is that, if you plase ? "

" You must go home," said the Sheep-shearer, " and say nothen to anybody, but fix in your mind which o' your three childer you'll give for the cow ; an when you do that, look in his eyes, an he'll sneeze, an don't you bless him, for the world. Then look in his eyes again, an he'll sneeze again, an still don't think o' blessen him, be any mains. The third time you'll look in his eyes he'll sneeze a third time—an if you don't bless him the third time, he'll die—but your cow will live."

" An this is the only cure you have to gi' me ? " exclaimed

Phadrig, his indignation at the moment overcoming his natural timidity.

"The only cure.—It was by a dale to do I could prevail on them to let you make the choice itself."

Phadrig declared stoutly against this decree, and even threw out some hints that he would try whether or no Shaun Lauther, or Strong John, a young rival of the sheep-shearing fairy doctor, might be able to make a better bargain for him with the "gentlemen."

"Shaun Lauther!" exclaimed Connor-of-the-Sheep, in high anger—"Do you compare me to a man that never seen any more than yourself?—that never saw so much as the skirt of a dead man's shroud in the moonlight—or heard as much as the moanen of a sowlth¹ in an old graveyard? Do you know me?—Ask them that do—an they'll tell you how often I'm called up in the night, and kep posten over bog an mountain, till I'm ready to drop down with the sleep,—while few voices are heard, I'll be bail, at Shaun Lauther's windey—an little knollidge given him in his drames. It is then that I get mine. Didn't I say before the King o' France was beheaded that a blow would be struck wit an axe in that place, that the sound of it would be heard all over Europe?—An wasn't it true? Didn't I hear the shots that were fired at Gibaralthur, an tell it over in Dooly's forge, that the place was relieved that day?—an didn't the news come afterwards in a month's time that I toul't nothen but the truth?"

Phadrig had nothing to say in answer to this overwhelming list of interrogatories—but to apologise for his want of credulity, and to express himself perfectly satisfied.

With a heavy heart he put forth in his canoe upon the water and prepared to return. It was already twilight, and as he glided along the peaceful shores he ruminated mournfully within his mind on the course which he should pursue. The loss of the cow would be, he considered, almost equivalent to total ruin—and the loss of any one of his lovely children was a probability which he could hardly bear to dwell on for a moment. Still it behoved him to weigh the matter well. Which of them, now—supposing it possible that he could think of sacrificing any—which of them would he select for the purpose? The choice was a hard one. There was little Mauria, a fair-haired, blue-eyed little girl—but he could not, for an instant, think of losing her, as she happened to be named after his first wife; her brother, little

¹ Bodiless spirit.

Shamus, was the least useful of the three, but he was the youngest—"the child of his old age—a little one!" his heart bled at the idea; he would lose the cow, and the pig along with it, before he would harm a hair of the darling infant's head. He thought of Patcy—and he shuddered and leaned heavier on his oars, as if to flee away from the horrible doubt which stole into his heart with that name. It must be one of the three, or the cow was lost for ever. The two first-mentioned he certainly would not lose—and Patcy! Again he bade the fiend begone, and trembling in every limb, made the canoe speed rapidly over the tide in the direction of his home.

He drew the little vessel ashore and proceeded towards his cabin. They had been waiting supper for him, and he learned with renewed anxiety that the object of his solicitude, the milch-cow, had rather fallen away than improved in her condition during his absence. He sat down in sorrowful silence with his wife and children to their humble supper of potatoes and thick milk.

He gazed intently on the features of each of the young innocents as they took their places on the saggan chairs that flanked the board. Little Mauria and her brother Shamus looked fresh, mirthful, and blooming from their noisy play in the adjoining paddock, while their elder brother, who had spent the day at school, wore—or seemed, to the distempered mind of his father, to wear a look of sullenness and chagrin. He was thinner, too, than most boys of his age—a circumstance which Phadrig had never remarked before. It might be the first indications of his poor mother's disease, consumption, that were beginning to declare themselves in his constitution; and if so, his doom was already sealed—and whether the cow died or not, Patcy was certain to be lost. Still the father could not bring his mind to resolve on any settled course, and their meal proceeded in silence.

Suddenly the latch of the door was lifted by some person outside, and a neighbour entered to inform Phadrig that the agent to his landlord had arrived in the adjacent village for the purpose of driving matters to extremity against all those tenants who remained in arrear. At the same moment, too, a low moan of anguish from the cow outside announced the access of a fresh paroxysm of her distemper, which it was very evident the poor animal could never come through in safety.

In an agony of distress and horror the distracted father laid his clenched fingers on the table, and looked fixedly in the eyes of the unsuspecting Patcy. The child sneezed, and Phadrig closed his lips

hard, for fear a blessing might escape them. The child at the same time, he observed, looked paler than before.

Fearful lest the remorse which began to awake within his heart might overweigh his resolution, and prevent the accomplishment of his unnatural design, he looked hurriedly a second time into the eyes of the little victim. Again the latter sneezed, and again the father, using a violent effort, restrained the blessing which was struggling at his heart. The poor child drooped his head upon his bosom, and letting the untasted food fall from his hand, looked so pale and mournful as to remind his murderer of the look which his mother wore in dying.

It was long—very long—before the heart-struck parent could prevail on himself to complete the sacrifice. The visitor departed ; and the first beams of a full moon began to supplant the faint and lingering twilight which was fast fading in the west. The dead of the night drew on before the family rose from their silent and comfortless meal. The agonies of the devoted animal now drew rapidly to a close, and Phadrig still remained tortured by remorse on the one hand, and by selfish anxiety on the other.

A sudden sound of anguish from the cow-house made him start from his seat. A third time he fixed his eyes on those of his child—a third time the boy sneezed—but here the charm was broken.

Milly Rue, looking with surprise and tenderness on the fainting boy, said, " Why, then, Heaven bless you, child !—it must be a cold you caught, you're sneezed so often."

Immediately the cow sent forth a bellow of deep agony, and expired ; and at the same moment a low and plaintive voice outside the door was heard, exclaiming, " And Heaven bless you, Milly ! and the Almighty bless you, and spare you a long time over your children ! "

Phadrig staggered back against the wall—his blood froze in his veins—his face grew white as death—his teeth chattered—his eyes stared—his hair moved upon his brow, and the chilling damp of terror exuded over all his frame. He recognised the voice of his first wife ; and her pale, cold eye met his at that moment, as her shade flitted by the window in the thin moonlight, and darted on him a glance of mournful reproach. He covered his eyes with his hands, and sunk, senseless, into a chair ; while the affrighted Milly, and Patcy, who at once assumed his glowing health and vigour, hastened to his assistance. They had all heard the voice, but no one saw the shade nor recognised the tone excepting the conscience-smitten Phadrig.

CHARLES JAMES LEVER

1806-1872

A HERO-WORSHIPPER

JEAN PAUL tells us that there never was a nature yet formed without its vein of romance—that the most realistic and commonplace people we have ever met have their moods of romance, and that the cord, however little we may suspect it, runs through the woof of all humanity.

I am not able to affirm that he is right ; but certainly a little incident which has just occurred to me leads me to believe that there are cases of the affection in natures and temperaments in which nothing would have led me to suspect them. I need not be told that it is the men who have a most worldly character who are often seen marrying portionless wives ; that traits of self-sacrifice and devotion are being continually displayed by cold, ungenial, and, to all seeming, unimpressible people. What I was not prepared for was to find that hero-worship could find a place in the heart of a hard, money-getting, money-lending fellow, whose ordinary estimate of humanity was based less on what they were than what they had. I own that I had no other clue to the man's nature than that furnished by a few lines of a newspaper advertisement, which set forth his readiness to advance sums from one hundred to five hundred pounds on mere personal security, and at a most moderate rate of interest. And though the former amounted to obligations, the breach of which would have reduced one to bondage, and the latter varied from eighty to a hundred and thirty per cent, he was so pleasant-looking, so chatty, so genially alive to the difficulties that beset youth, so forgivingly merciful to wasteful habits and ways, that I took to him from the moment I saw him, and signed my four bills for fifty each, and took up my hundred and eighteen pounds off the table with the feeling that at last I had found in an utter stranger that generous trustfulness and liberality I had in vain looked for amongst kindred and relatives.

We had a pint of madeira to seal the bargain. He told me in a whisper it was a priceless vintage. I believe him. On a rough calculation, I think every glass I took of it cost me forty-seven pounds some

odd shillings. It is not, however, to speak of this event that I desire here. Mr. Nathan Joel and I ceased after a while to be the dear friends we swore to be over that madeira. The history of those four bills, too complicated to relate, became disagreeable. There were difficulties—there were renewals—there were protests—and there was a writ. Nathan Joel was—no matter what. I got out of his hands after three years by ceding a reversion worth five times my debt, with several white hairs in my whiskers, and a clearer view of gentlemen of the Jewish persuasion than I had ever picked up out of Ecclesiasticus.

A good many years rolled over—years in which I now and then saw mention of Mr. Joel as a plaintiff or an opposing creditor—once or twice as assignee, too. He was evidently thriving. Men were living very fast, smashes were frequent, and one can imagine the coast of Cornwall rather a lucrative spot after a stormy equinox. I came abroad, however, and lost sight of him; a chance mention, perhaps, in a friend's letter, how he had fallen into Joel's hands—that Joel advanced or refused to advance the money—something about cash, was all that I knew of him, till t'other evening the landlord of the little inn near my villa called up to ask if I knew anything of a certain Mr. Nathan Joel, who was then at his inn, without baggage, money, papers, or effects of any kind, but who, on hearing my name, cried out with ecstasy, "Ah! he knows me. You've only to ask Mr. O'Dowd who I am, and he'll satisfy you at once."

"So," thought I, "Joel! the Lord hath delivered thee into my hands, and now, what sort of vengeance shall I take? Shall I ignore you utterly, and declare that your claim to my acquaintance is a gross and impudent fraud? Shall I tell the innkeeper I disown you?" If this was my first thought, it soon gave way—it was so long since the rascal had injured me, and I had cursed him very often for it since then. It was his nature too; *that* also ought to be borne in mind. When leeches cease sucking they die, and very probably money-lenders wither and dry up when they are not abstracting our precious metals.

"I'll go over and see if it be the man I know," said I, and set off at once towards the inn. As I went along, the innkeeper told me how the stranger had arrived three nights back, faint, weary, and exhausted, saying that the guide refused to accompany him after he entered the valley, and merely pointed out the road and left him. "This much I got out of him," said the landlord, "but he is not inclined

to say more, but sits there wringing his hands, and moaning most piteously."

Joel was at the window as I came up, but seeing me he came to the door. "Oh, Mr. O'Dowd," cried he, "befriend me this once, sir. Don't bear malice, nor put your foot on the fallen, sir. Do pity me, sir, I beseech you."

The wretched look of the poor devil pleaded for him far better than his words. He was literally in rags, and such rags, too, as seemed to have once been worn by another, for he had a brown peasant jacket and a pair of goatskin breeches, and a pair of shoes fastened round his ankles with leather thongs.

"So," said I, "you have got tired of small robberies and taken to the wholesale line. When did you become a highwayman?"

"Ah, sir," cried he, "don't be jocose, don't be droll. This is too pitiful a case for laughter."

I composed my features into a semblance of decent gravity, and after a little while induced him to relate his story, which ran thus:

Mr. Joel, it appeared, who for some thirty years of life had taken a very practical view of humanity, estimating individuals pretty much like scrip, and ascribing to them what value they might bring in the market, had suddenly been seized with a most uncommon fervour for Victor Emmanuel, the first impulse being given by a "good thing he had done in Piedmontese fives," and a rather profitable investment he had once made in the Cavour Canal. In humble gratitude for these successes, he had bought a print of the burly monarch, whose bullet head and bristling moustaches stared fiercely at him from over the fireplace, till by mere force of daily recurrence he grew to feel for the stern soldier a sentiment of terror dashed with an intense admiration.

"Talk of Napoleon, sir," he would say, "he's a humbug—an imposition—a wily, tricky, intriguing dodger. If you want a great man, a man that never knew fear, a man that is above all flimsy affectations, a man of the heroic stamp—there he is for you!"

"As for Garibaldi, he's not to be compared to him. Garibaldi was an adventurer, and made adventure a career; but here's a king; here's a man who has a throne, who was born in a palace, descended from a long line of royal ancestors, and instead of giving himself up to a life of inglorious ease and self-indulgence, he mounts his horse and heads a regiment, sir. He takes to the field like the humblest soldier in his

rank, goes out, thrashes the Austrians, drives them out of Milan, hunts them over the plains of Lombardy, and in seven days raises the five per cents from fifty-one and a half to eighty-two and a quarter 'for the account.' Show me the equal of that in history, sir. There's not another man in Europe could have done as much for the market."

His enthusiasm knew no bounds ; he carried a gold piece of twenty francs, with the King's image, to his watch-chain, and wore small coins with the cross of Savoy in his breast, as shirt-studs. An ardour intense as this is certain to bear its effects. Mr. Joel had often promised himself a trip to the Continent, of which he knew nothing beyond Paris. He took, then, the season of autumn, when the House was up, and money-lending comparatively dull, and came abroad. He told his friends he was going to Vichy ; he affected a little gout. It was a disease gentlemen occasionally permitted themselves, and Mr. Joel was a rising man, and liked to follow the lead of persons of condition. Very different, however, was his object ; his real aim was to see the great man whose whole life and actions had taken such an intense hold on his imagination. To see him, to gaze on him, to possess himself fully of the actual living traits of the heroic sovereign ; and if by any accident, by any happy chance, by any of those turns of capricious fortune which now and then elevate men into a passing greatness, to get speech of him !—this Mr. Joel felt would be an operation more overwhelmingly entrancing than if Spanish bonds were to be paid off in full, or Poyais fives to be quoted at par in the market.

It is not impossible that Mr. Joel believed his admiration for the *Re Galantuomo* gave him a *bona fide* and positive claim on that monarch's regard. This is a delusion by no means rare : it possesses a large number of people, and influences them in their conduct to much humbler objects of worship than a king on his throne. Sculptors, authors, and painters know something of what I mean, and not uncommonly come to hear how ungraciously they are supposed to have responded to an admiration of which it is possible they never knew, and which it would be very excusable in them if they never valued. The worshipper, in fact, fancies that the incense he sends up as smoke should come back to him in some shape substantial. However this may be, and I am not going to persist further on my reader's attention, Mr. Joel got to imagine that Victor Emmanuel would have felt as racy an enjoyment at meeting with *him*, as he himself anticipated he might experience in

meeting the King. It goes a very long way in our admiration of any one to believe that the individual so admired has a due and just appreciation of ourselves. We start at least with one great predisposing cause of love—an intense belief in the good sense and good taste of the object of our affections.

Fully persuaded, then, that the meeting would be an event of great enjoyment to each, the chief difficulty was to find a "mutual friend," as the slang has it, to bring them into the desired relations.

This was really difficult. Had King Victor Emmanuel been an industrial monarch, given to cereals, or pottery, gutta-percha, cotton, or corrugated iron, something might have been struck out to present him with as pretext for an audience. Was he given to art, or devoted to some especial science?—a bust, a bronze, or a medal might have paved the way to an interview. The King, however, had no such leanings, and whatever his weaknesses, there were none within the sphere of the money-changer's attributions; and as Mr. Joel could not pretend that he knew of a short cut to Venice, or a secret path that led to the Vatican, he had to abandon all hopes of approaching the monarch by the legitimate roads.

"See him I must, speak to him I will," were, however, the vows he had registered in his own heart, and he crossed the Alps with this firm resolve, leaving, as other great men before him have done, time and the event to show the way where the goal had been so firmly fixed on.

At Turin he learned the King had just gone to Ancona to open a new line of railroad. He hastened after him, and arrived the day after the celebration to discover that His Majesty had left for Brindisi. He followed to Brindisi, and found the King had only stopped there an hour, and then pursued his journey to Naples. Down to Naples went Mr. Joel at once, but to his intense astonishment, nobody there had heard a word of the King's arrival. They did not, indeed, allege the thing was impossible; but they slyly insinuated that, if His Majesty had really come, and had not thought proper to make his arrival matter of notoriety, they, as Italians, Neapolitans *surtout*, knew good manners better than to interfere with a retirement it was their duty to respect. This they said with a sort of half-droll significancy that puzzled Mr. Joel much, for he had lived little in Italy, and knew far more about Cremorne than the Casino!

Little dubious sentences, shallow insinuations, half-laughing

obscurities, were not weapons to repel such a man as Joel. His mind was too steadfastly intent on its object to be deterred by such petty opposition. He had come to see the King, and see him he would. This same speech he made so frequently, so publicly, and so energetically, that at the various cafés which he frequented, no sooner was he seen to enter than some stranger to him—all were strangers—would usually come up in the most polite manner, and express a courteous hope that he had been successful, and had either dined with His Majesty or passed the evening with him. It is needless to say that the general impression was that poor Mr. Joel was a lunatic, but as his form of the malady seemed mild and inoffensive, his case was one entirely for compassion and pity.

A few, however, took a different view. They were of the police, and consequently they regarded the incident professionally. To their eyes, Joel was a Mazzinian, and came out specially to assassinate the King. It is such an obvious thing to the official mind that a man on such an errand would attract every notice to his intentions beforehand, that they not alone decided Joel to be an intended murderer, but they kept a strict record of all the people he accidentally addressed, all the waiters who served, and all the hackney cabmen who drove him, while the telegraphic wires of the whole kingdom vibrated with one name, asking, Who is Joel ? trace Joel ; send some one to identify Joel. Little poor Joel knew all this time that he had been photographed as he sat eating his oysters, and that scraps of his letters were pasted on a large piece of pasteboard in the Ministry of Police, that his hand-writing might be shown under his varied attempts to disguise it.

One evening he sat much later than was his wont at a little open-air café of the St. Lucia quarter. The sky was gloriously starlit, and the air had all the balmy softness of the delicious south. Joel would have enjoyed it and the cool drink before him intensely, if it were not that his disappointed hopes threw a dark shadow over everything, and led him to think of all that his journey had cost him in cash, and all in the foregone opportunities of discounts and usuries.

A frequenter of the café, with whom he had occasionally exchanged greetings, sat at the same table ; but they said little to each other, the stranger being evidently one not given to much converse, and rather disposed to the indulgence of his own thoughts in silence.

"Is it not strange," said Joel, after a long pause, "that I must go back without seeing him?"

A half-impatient grunt was all the reply, for the stranger was well weary of Joel and his sorrows.

"One would suppose that he really wanted to keep out of my way, for up to this moment no one can tell me if he be here or not."

Another grunt.

"It is not that I have left anything undone, Heaven knows. There isn't a quarter of the town I have not walked, day and night, and his is not a face to be mistaken; I'd know him at a glance."

"And what in the devil's name do you want with him when you have seen him?" exclaimed the other, angrily. "Do you imagine that a king of Italy has nothing better to do with his time than grant audiences to every idle John Bull whose debts or doctors have sent him over the Alps?" This rude speech was so fiercely delivered, and with a look and tone so palpably provocative, that Joel at once perceived his friend intended to draw him into a quarrel, so he finished off his liquor, took up his hat and cane, and with a polite *felice sera, Signor*, was about to withdraw.

"Excuse me," said the stranger, rising, with a manner at once obsequious and apologetic. "I entreat you to forgive my rude and impatient speech. I was thinking of something else, and forgot myself. Sit down for one moment, and I will try and make you a proper reparation—a reparation you will be satisfied with. You want to see the King, and you desire to speak with him: both can be done with a little courage; and when I say this, I mean rather presence of mind—*aplomb*, as the French say—than anything like intrepidity or daring. Do you possess the quality I speak of?"

"It is my precise gift—the essential feature of my character," cried Joel in ecstasy.

"This, then, is the way—and mind I tell you this secret on the faith that as an English gentleman you preserve it inviolate—'parole Inglese,' is a proverb with us, and we have reason to believe that it deserves its signification."

Joel swore to observe the bond, and the other continued:

"The King, it is needless to tell you, detests state and ceremonial; he abhors courtly etiquette, and the life of a palace is to him the slavery of the galleys. His real pleasure is the society of a few intimates, whom he treats as equals, and with whom he discourses in the rough

dialect of Piedmont, as it is talked in the camp by his soldiers. Even this amount of liberty is, however, sometimes not sufficient for this bold native spirit ; he longs for more freedom—for, in fact, that utter absence of all deference, all recognition of his high estate, which followers never can forget ; and to arrive at this, he now and then steals out at night and gains the mountains, where, with a couple of dogs and a rifle, he will pass two, three, perhaps four days, sharing the peasant's fare and his couch, eating the coarsest food, and sleeping on straw, with a zest that shows what a veritable type of the medieval baron this Count of Savoy really is, and by what a mistake it is that he belongs to an age where the romance of such a character is an anachronism !

“ You may feel well astonished that nobody could tell you where he is—whether here or at Turin, at Bologna, at Florence, or Palermo. The fact is, they don't know ; that's the real truth—not one of them knows ; all they are aware of is that he is off—away on one of those *escapades* on which it would be as much as life is worth to follow him ; and there is La Marmora, and there sits Minghetti, and yonder Della Rovere, not daring to hint a syllable as to the King's absence, nor even to hazard a guess above a whisper as to when he will come back again. Now I can tell you where he is—a mere accident put me in possession of the secret. A *fattore* of my brother's came up yesterday from the Terri di Lavoro, and told how a strange man, large, strong-boned, and none over bland-looking, had been quail-shooting over the Podere for the last two days ; he said he was a wonderful shot, but cared nothing about his game, which he gave freely away to any one he met. I made him describe him accurately, and he told me how he wore a tall high-crowned hat—a ‘calabrese’ as they call it—with a short peacock's feather, a brown jacket all covered with little buttons, leather small-clothes ending above the knees, which were naked, light gaiters half-way up the leg, his gun slung at his back, pistols in his belt, and a *couteau-de-chasse* without a scabbard hung by a string to his waist-belt ; he added that he spoke little, and that little in a strange dialect, probably Roman or from the Marches.

“ By a few other traits he established the identity of one whose real rank and condition he never had the slightest suspicion of. Now, as the King is still there, and as he told the Paroco of the little village at Catanzaro that he'd send him some game for his Sunday dinner, which he meant to partake of with him, you have only to set out to-night, reach Nola, where, with the aid of a pony and a carratella, you

will make your way to Raniglia, after which, three miles of a brisk mountain walk—nothing to an Englishman—you'll arrive at Catanzaro, where there is a little inn. He calls there every evening, coming down the valley from St. Agata, and if you would like to meet him casually, as it were, you have only to set out a little before sunset and stroll up the gorge; there you'll find him." The stranger went on to instruct Mr. Joel how he should behave to the distinguished unknown—how, while carefully avoiding all signs of recognition, he should never forget that he was in the presence of one accustomed to the most deferential respect.

"Your manner," said he, "must be an artful blending of easy politeness with a watchful caution against over-familiarity; in fact, try to make him believe that you never suspect his great rank, and at the same time take care that in your own heart you never forget it. Not a very easy thing to do, but the strong will that has sent you so far will doubtless supply the way to help you further"; and with a few more such friendly counsels he wished Joel success and a good-night, and departed.

Mr. Joel took his place in the "rotondo" of the diligence—no other was vacant—and set off that night in company with two priests, a gendarme, and a captured galley-slave, who was about to show the officers of justice where a companion of his flight had sought concealment. The company ate and drank, smoked villainous tobacco, and sang songs all night, so that when Joel reached Nola he was so overcome with fatigue, headache, and sickness, that he had to take to bed, where the doctor who was sent for bled him twice, and would have done so four or five times more, if the patient, resisting with the little strength left him, had not put him out of the room and locked the door, only opening it to creep downstairs and escape from Nola for ever. He managed with some difficulty to get a place in a baroccino to Raniglia, and made the journey surrounded with empty wine-flasks, which required extreme care and a very leisurely pace, so that the distance, which was but eighteen miles, occupied nearly as many hours. It took him a full day to recruit at Raniglia, all the more since the rest of the journey must be made on foot.

"I own, sir," said Mr. Joel, whom I now leave to speak for himself, "it was with a heavy heart I arose that morning and thought of what was before me. I had already gone through much fatigue and considerable illness, and I felt that if any mishap should befall me in that

wild region, with its wild-looking semi-savage inhabitants, the world would never hear more of me. It was a sad way to finish a life which had not been altogether unsuccessful, and I believe I shed tears as I fastened on my knapsack and prepared for the road. A pedlar kept me company for two miles, and I tried to induce him to go on the whole way with me to Catanzaro, but he pointed to his pack, and said, 'There are folk up there who help themselves too readily to such wares as I carry. I'd rather visit Catanzaro with an empty pack than a full one.' He was curious to learn what led *me* to visit the place, and I told him it was to see the fine mountain scenery and the great chestnut and cork woods of which I had heard so much. He only shook his head in reply. I don't know whether he disbelieved me, or whether he meant that the journey would scarce repay the fatigue. I arrived at Catanzaro about three in the afternoon. It was a blazing hot day—the very air seemed to sparkle with the fiery sun's rays, and the village, in regular Italian fashion, was on the very summit of a mountain, around which other mountains of far greater height were grouped in a circle. Every house was shut up, the whole population was in bed, and I had as much difficulty in getting admission to the inn as if I had come at midnight."

I will not trouble my reader to follow Mr. Joel in his description of or comment upon Italian village life, nor ask him to listen to the somewhat lengthy dialogue that took place between him and the priest, a certain Don Lertoro, a most miserable, half-famished fellow, with the worst countenance imaginable, and a vein of ribaldry in his talk that, Mr. Joel declared, the most degraded creature might have been ashamed of.

By an artful turn of the conversation, Joel led the priest to talk of the strangers who occasionally came up to visit the mountain, and at last made bold to ask, as though he had actually seen him, who was the large, strong-boned man, with a rifle slung behind him : he did not look like a native of these parts.

"Where did you meet him ?" asked the priest with a furtive look.

"About a mile from this," said Joel ; "he was standing on the rock over the bridge as I crossed the torrent."

"*Che Bestia !*" muttered Don Lertoro, angrily ; but whether the compliment was meant for Joel or the unknown did not appear. Unwilling to resume the theme, however, he affected to busy himself about getting some salad for supper, and left Joel to himself.

While Joel sat ruminating, in part pleasantly, over the craft of his own address, and in part dubiously, thinking over Don Lertoro's exclamation, and wondering if the holy man really knew who the stranger was, the priest returned to announce the supper.

By Joel's account, a great game of fence followed the meal, each pushing the other home with very searching inquiries, but Joel candidly declaring that the Don, shrewd as he was, had no chance with him, insomuch as that, while he completely baffled the other as to what led him there, how long he should remain, and where go to afterwards, he himself ascertained that the large heavy-boned man with the rifle might usually be met every evening about sunset in the gorge coming down from St. Agata ; in fact, there was a little fountain about three miles up the valley which was a favourite spot of his to eat his supper at—" a spot easily found," said the priest, " for there are four cypress trees at it, and on the rock overhead you'll see a wooden cross, where a man was murdered once."

This scarcely seemed to Joel's mind as a very appetising element ; but he said nothing, and went his way. As the day was drawing to a close, Mr. Joel set out for the fountain. The road, very beautiful and picturesque as it was, was eminently lonely. After leaving the village he never saw a human being ; and though the evening was deliciously fine, and the wild flowers at either side scented the air, and a clear rivulet ran along the roadside with a pleasant murmur, there was that in the solitude and silence, and the tall peaked mountains, lone and grim, that terrified and appalled him. Twice was he so overcome that he almost determined to turn back and abandon the expedition.

Onward, however, he went, encouraging himself by many little flatteries and compliments to his own nature. How bold he was ! how original ! how unlike other money-lenders ! what manifest greatness there must be somewhere in the temperament of one like him, who could thus leave home and country, security, and the watchful supervision of Scotland Yard, to come into the wild mountains of Calabria, just to gratify an intellectual craving ! These thoughts carried him over miles of the way, and at last he came in sight of the four cypress trees ; and as he drew nigh, sure enough there was the little wooden cross standing out against the sky ; and while he stopped to look at it, a loud voice, so loud as to make him start, shouted out, "*Alto là*—who are you ? "

Mr. Joel looked about him on every side, but no one was to be seen.

He crossed the road, and came back again, and for a moment he seemed to doubt whether it was not some trick of his own imagination suggested the cry, when it was repeated still louder ; and now his eyes caught sight of a tall, high-crowned hat, rising above the rank grass on a cliff over the road, the wearer being evidently lying down on the sward. Joel had but time to remove his hat courteously, when the figure sprang to his feet, and revealed the person of an immense man. He looked gigantic on the spot he stood on, and with his stern, flushed features, and enormous moustaches, turned fiercely upwards at the points, recalled to Mr. Joel the well-known print over his chimney-piece at home. "Where are you going ?" cried he, sternly.

"Nowhere in particular, sir. Strolling to enjoy my cigar," replied Joel, trembling.

"Wait a moment," said the other, and came clattering down the cliff ; his rifle, his pistols, and his ammunition pouches making a terrific uproar as he came.

"You came from Catanzaro—were there any gendarmes there when you left ?"

"None, sire : not one," said Joel, who was so overcome by the dignity of the gentleman that he forgot all his intended reserve.

"No lies, no treachery, or, by the precious tears of the Madonna, I'll blow your brains out."

"Your Majesty may believe every word I utter in the length and breadth of the Peninsula ; you have not a more devoted worshipper."

"Did you see the priest, Don Lertoro ?"

"Yes, sire ; it was *he* told me where I should find Your Majesty, at the well, here, under the cypress trees."

"*Scioccone !*" cried the stranger ; but whether the epithet was meant for Joel or the cure did not appear. A very long and close cross-examination ensued, in which Joel was obliged not merely to explain who he was, whence he came, and what he came for, but to narrate a variety of personal circumstances which at the time it seemed strange His Majesty would care to listen to—such as the amount of money he had with him, how much more he had left behind at Naples, how he had no friends in that capital, nor any one like to interest themselves about him if he should get into trouble, or require to be assisted in any way. Apparently the King was satisfied with all his replies, for he finished by inviting him to partake of some supper with him ; and, producing a small basket from under the brushwood, he drew forth a

couple of fowls, some cheese, and a flask of wine. It was not until he had drunk up three large goblets of the wine that Joel found himself sufficiently courageous to be happy. At last, however, he grew easy, and even familiar, questioning His Majesty about the sort of life he led, and asking how it was that he never fell into the hands of brigands.

Nothing could be more genial or good-humoured than the King ; he was frankness itself ; he owned that his life might possibly be better ; that, on the whole, his father confessor was obliged to bear a good deal from him ; and that all his actions were not in strictest conformity with church discipline.

" You ought to marry again ; I am persuaded, sir," said Joel, " it would be the best thing you could do."

" I don't know," said the other, thoughtfully. " I have a matter of seven wives as it is, and I don't want any more."

" Ah ! Your Majesty, I guess what you mean," said Joel, winking ; " but that's not what I would suggest. I mean some strong political connection—some alliance with a royal house, Russian or Bavarian, if, indeed, Austrian were not possible."

" On the whole," said Joel, " I found that he didn't much trust any one ; he thought ill of Louis Napoleon, and called him some hard names ; he was not over-complimentary to the Pope ; and as for Garibaldi, he said they had once been thick as thieves, but of late they had seen little of each other, and, for his part, he was not sorry for it. All this time, sir," continued Joel, " His Majesty was always fancying something or other that I wore or carried about me ; first it was my watch, which I felt much honoured by his deigning to accept ; then it was my shirt-studs, then my wrist-buttons, then my tobacco-pouch, then my pipe, a very fine meerschaum, and at last, to my intense astonishment, my purse, whose contents he actually emptied on the table, and counted out before me, asking me if I had not any more about me, either in notes or bills, for it seemed a small sum for a ' Milordo,' so he called me, to travel with.

" Whatever I had, however, he took it—took every carlino of it—saying, ' There's no getting any change up here—there are no bankers, my dear Signor Joel ; but we'll meet at Naples one of these days, and set all these things to rights.'

" I suppose the wine must have been far stronger than I thought ; perhaps, too, drinking it in the open air made it more heady ; then the novelty of the situation had its effect—it's not every day that a man

sits hobnobbing with a king. Whatever the reason, I became confused and addled, and my mind wandered. I forgot where I was. I believe I sang something—I am not sure what—and the King sang, and then we both sang together ; and at last he whistled with a silver call-whistle that he wore, and he gave me in charge to a fellow—a ragged rascally-looking dog he was—to take me back to Catanzaro ; and the scoundrel, instead of doing so, led me off through the mountains for a day and a half, and dropped me at last at Reccone, a miserable village, without tasting food for twelve hours. He made me change clothes with him, too, and take his dirty rags, this goat-skin vest and the rest of it, instead of my new tweed suit ; and then, sir, as we parted, he clapped me familiarly on the shoulder, and said, ‘ Mind me, *amico mio*, you’re not to tell the padrone, when you see him, that I took your clothes from you, or he’ll put a bullet through me. Mind *that*, or you’ll have to settle your scores with one of my brothers.’

“ ‘ By the padrone you perhaps mean the King,’ said I, haughtily.

“ ‘ King, if you like,’ said he, grinning ; ‘ we call him “ Ninco Nanco ” : and now that they’ve shot Pilone, and taken Stoppa, there’s not another brigand in the whole of Italy to compare with him.’ Yes, sir, out came the horrid truth. It was Ninco Nanco, the greatest monster in the Abruzzi, I had mistaken for Victor Emmanuel. It was to him I had presented my watch, my photograph, my seal-ring, and my purse with forty-two napoleons. Dirty, ragged, wretched, in tatters, and famished, I crept on from village to village till I reached this place yesterday evening, only beseeching leave to be let lie down and die, for I don’t think I’ll ever survive the shame of my misfortune, if my memory should be cruel enough to preserve the details.”

“ Cheer up, Joel ; the King is to review the National Guard to-day. I’ll take care that you shall have a good place to see him, and a good dinner afterwards.”

“ No, sir ; I’ll not go and look at him. Ninco Nanco has cured me of hero-worship. I’ll go back to town and see after the exchanges. The sovereigns that come from the mint are the only ones I mean to deal with from this day forward.”

JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU
1814-1878

THE GHOST AND THE BONE-SETTER

*Extract from the MS. papers of the late Rev. Francis Purcell
of Drumcoolagh*

I TELL the following particulars, as nearly as I can recollect them, in the words of the narrator. It may be necessary to observe that he was what is termed a well-spoken man, having for a considerable time instructed the ingenious youth of his native parish in such of the liberal arts and sciences as he found it convenient to profess—a circumstance which may account for the occurrence of several big words in the course of this narrative, more distinguished for euphonious effect than for correctness of application. I proceed, then, without further preface, to lay before you the wonderful adventures of Terry Neil.

“ Why, thin, 'tis a quare story, an' as thrue as you're sittin' there ; and I'd make bould to say there isn't a boy in the seven parishes could tell it better nor crickther than myself, for 'twas my father himself it happened to, an' many's the time I heerd it out iv his own mouth ; an' I can say, an' I'm proud av that same, my father's word was as incredible as any squire's oath in the counthry ; and so signs an' if a poor man got into any unlucky throuble, he was the boy'id go into the court an' prove ; but that doesn't signify—he was as honest and as sober a man, barrin' he was a little bit too partial to the glass, as you'd find in a day's walk ; an' there wasn't the likes of him in the counthry round for nate labourin' an' *baan* diggin' ; and he was mighty handy entirely for carpenter's work, and mendin' ould spudethrees, an' the likes i' that. An' so he tuk up with bone-settin', as was most nathural, for none of them could come up to him in mendin' the leg iv a stool or a table ; an' sure, there never was a bone-setter got so much custom—man an' child, young an' ould—there never was such breakin' and mendin' of bones known in the memory of man. Well, Terry Neil—for that was my father's name—began to feel his heart growin' light, and his purse heavy ; an' he took a bit iv a farm in Squire Phelim's

ground, just undher the ould castle, an' a pleasant little spot it was ; an' day an' mornin' poor crathurs not able to put a foot to the ground, with broken arms and broken legs, id be comin' ramblin' in from all quarters to have their bones spliced up. Well, yer honour, all this was as well as well could be ; but it was customary when Sir Phelim id go anywhere out iv the country, for some iv the tinants to sit up to watch in the ould castle, just for a kind of compliment to the ould family—an' a mighty unplisant compliment it was for the tinants, for there wasn't a man of them but knew there was something quare about the ould castle. The neighbours had it that the squire's ould grandfather, as good a gintleman—God be with him—as I heer'd, as ever stood in shoe-leather, used to keep walkin' about in the middle iv the night, ever sinst he bursted a blood-vessel pullin' out a cork out iv a bottle, as you or I might be doin', and will too, please God—but that doesn't signify. So, as I was sayin', the ould squire used to come down out of the frame, where his picthur was hung up, and to break the bottles and glasses—God be merciful to us all—an' dthrink all he could come at—an' small blame to him for that same ; and then if any of the family id be comin' in, he id be up again in his place, looking as quite an' as innocent as if he didn't know anything about it—the mischievous ould chap.

“ Well, yer honour, as I was sayin', one time the family up at the castle was stayin' in Dublin for a week or two ; and so, as usual, some of the tinants had to sit up in the castle, and the third night it kem to my father's turn. ‘ Oh, tare an' ouns ! ’ says he unto himself, ‘ an' must I sit up all night, and that ould vagabone of a sperit, glory be to God,’ says he, ‘ serenadin' through the house, an' doin' all sorts iv mischief ? ’ However, there was no gettin' aff, and so he put a bould face on it, an' he went up at nightfall with a bottle of pottieen, and another of holy wather.

“ It was rainin' smart enough, an' the evenin' was darksome an' gloomy, when my father got in ; an' what with the rain he got, an' the holy wather he sprinkled on himself, it wasn't long till he had to swally a cup iv the pottieen, to keep the cowld out iv his heart. It was the ould steward, Lawrence Connor, that opened the door—and he an' my father wor always very great. So when he seen who it was, an' my father tould him how it was his turn to watch in the castle, he offered to sit up along with him ; an' you may be sure my father wasn't sorry for that same. So says Larry :

" ' We'll have a bit iv fire in the parlour,' says he.

" ' An' why not in the hall ? ' says my father, for he knew that the squire's picthur was hung in the parlour.

" ' No fire can be lit in the hall,' says Lawrence, ' for there's an ould jackdaw's nest in the chimney.'

" ' Oh, thin,' says my father, ' let us stop in the kitchen, for it's very unproper for the likes iv me to be sittin' in the parlour,' says he.

" ' Oh, Terry, that can't be,' says Lawrence ; ' if we keep up the ould custom at all, we may as well keep it up properly,' says he.

" ' Divil sweep the ould custom ! ' says my father—to himself, do ye mind, for he didn't like to let Lawrence see that he was more afeard himself.

" ' Oh, very well,' says he. ' I'm agreeable, Lawrence,' says he ; and so down they both wint to the kitchen, until the fire id be lit in the parlour—an' that same wasn't long doin'.

" Well, yer honour, they soon wint up again, an' sat down mighty comfortable by the parlour fire, and they beganned to talk, an' to smoke, an' to dhrink a small taste iv the pottien ; and, moreover, they had a good rousin' fire o' bogwood and turf, to warm their shins over.

" Well, sir, as I was sayin', they kep' convarsin' an' smokin' together most agreeable, until Lawrence beginn'd to get sleepy, as was but nathural for him, for he was an ould sarvint man, an' was used to a great dale iv sleep.

" ' Sure it's impossible,' says my father, ' it's gettin' sleepy you are ? '

" ' Oh, divil a taste,' says Larry ; ' I'm only shuttin' my eyes,' says he, ' to keep out the parfume o' the tibacky smoke, that's makin' them wather,' says he. ' So don't you mind other people's business,' says he, stiff enough, for he had a mighty high stomach av his own (rest his sowl), ' and go on,' says he, ' with your story, for I'm listenin',' says he, shuttin' down his eyes.

" Well, when my father seen spakin'—was no use, he went on with his story. By the same token, it was the story of Jim Soolivan and his ould goat he was tellin'—an' a plisant story it is—an' there was so much divarsion in it, that it was enough to waken a dormouse, let alone to pervint a Christian goin' asleep. But, faix, the way my father tould it, I believe there never was the likes heerd sinst nor before, for he bawled out every word av it, as if the life was fairly lavin' him, thryin' to keep ould Larry awake ; but, faix, it was no use, for the

hoorsness came an him, an' before he kem to the end of his story Larry O'Connor began to snore like a bagpipes.

" ' Oh, blur an' agres,' says my father, ' isn't this a hard case,' says he, ' that ould villain, lettin' on to be my friend, and to go asleep this way, an' us both in the very room with a sperit,' says he. ' The crass o' Christ about us ! ' says he ; and with that he was goin' to shake Lawrence to waken him, but he just remimbered if he roused him, that he'd surely go off to his bed, an' lave him complately alone, an' that id be by far worse.

" ' Oh thin,' says my father, ' I'll not disturb the poor boy. It id be neither friendly nor good-nathured,' says he, ' to tormint him while he is asleep,' says he ; ' only I wish I was the same way myself,' says he.

" An' with that he began to walk up an' down, an' sayin' his prayers, until he worked himself into a sweat, savin' your presence. But it was all no good ; so he dthrunk about a pint of sperits, to compose his mind.

" ' Oh,' says he, ' I wish to the Lord I was as asy in my mind as Larry there. Maybe,' says he, ' if I thried I could go asleep ' ; an' with that he pulled a big armchair close beside Lawrence, an' settled himself in it as well as he could.

" But there was one quare thing I forgot to tell you. He couldn't help, in spite av himself, lookin' now an' thin at the picthur, an' he immediately obsarved that the eyes av it was follyin' him about, an' starin' at him, an' winkin' at him, wheriver he wint. ' Oh,' says he, when he seen that, ' it's a poor chance I have,' says he ; ' an' bad luck was with me the day I kem into this unforthunate place,' says he. ' But any way there's no use in bein' freckened now,' says he ; ' for if I am to die, I may as well parspire undaunted,' says he.

" Well, your honour, he thried to keep himself quite an' asy, an' he thought two or three times he might have wint asleep, but for the way the storm was groanin' an' creakin' through the great heavy branches outside, an' whistlin' through the ould chimleys iv the castle. Well, afther one great roarin' blast iv the wind, you'd think the walls iv the castle was just goin' to fall, quite an' clane, with the shakin' iv it. All av a suddint the storm stopt, as silent an' as quite as if it was a July evenin'. Well, your honour, it wasn't stopped blowin' for three minnites, before he thought he hard a sort iv a noise over the chimley-piece ; an' with that my father just opened his eyes the smallest taste

in life an' sure enough he seen the ould squire gettin' out iv the picthur, for all the world as if he was throwin' aff his ridin' coat, until he stept out clane an' compleate, out av the chimley-piece, an' thrun himself down an the floor. Well, the slieven ould chap—an' my father thought it was the dirtiest turn iv all—before he beganened to do any-thing out iv the way, he stopped for a while to listen wor they both asleep ; an' as soon as he thought all was quite, he put out his hand an' tuk hould iv the whisky bottle, an' dhrank at laste a pint iv it. Well, your honour, when he tuk his turn out iv it, he settled it back mighty cute entirely, in the very same spot it was in before. An' he beganened to walk up an' down the room, lookin' as sober an' as solid as if he never done the likes at all. An' whinever he went apast my father, he thought he felt a great scent of brimstone, an' it was that that freckened him entirely ; for he knew it was brimstone that was burned in hell, savin' your presence. At any rate, he often heerd it from Father Murphy, an' he had a right to know what belonged to it—he's dead since, God rest him. Well, your honour, my father was asy enough until the sperit kem past him ; so close, God be marcifful to us all, that the smell in the sulphur tuk the breath clane out iv him ; an' with that he tuk such a fit iv coughin', that it al-a-most shuk him out iv the chair he was sittin' in.

" ' Ho, ho ! ' says the squire, stoppin' short about two steps aff, an' turnin' round facin' my father, ' is it you that's in it ?—an' how's all with you, Terry Neil ? ' "

" ' At your honour's sarvice,' says my father (as well as the fright id let him, for he was more dead than alive), ' an' it's proud I am to see your honour to-night,' says he.

" ' Terence,' says the squire, ' you're a respectable man ' (an' it was throe for him), ' an industhrious, sober man, an' an example of inebriety to the whole parish,' says he.

" ' Thank your honour,' says my father, gettin' courage, ' you were always a civil-spoken gintleman, God rest your honour.' "

" ' Rest my honour ? ' says the sperit (fairly gettin' red in the face with the madness), ' Rest my honour ? ' says he. ' Why, you ignorant spalpeen,' says he, ' you mane, niggarly ignoramush,' says he, ' where did you lave your manners ? ' says he. ' If I *am* dead, it's no fault iv mine,' says he ; ' an' it's not to be thrun in my teeth at every hand's turn, by the likes iv you,' says he, stampin' his foot an the flure, that you'd think the boords id smash undther him.

“ ‘Oh,’ says my father, ‘I’m only a foolish, ignorant poor man,’ says he.

“ ‘You’re nothing else,’ says the squire; ‘but any way,’ says he, ‘it’s not to be listenin’ to your gosther, nor convarsin’ with the likes iv you, that I came ~~up~~—down I mane,’ says he—(an’ as little as the mistake was, my father tuk notice iv it). ‘Listen to me now, Terence Neil,’ says he; ‘I was always a good masther to Pathrick Neil, your grandfather,’ says he.

“ ‘ ‘Tis thrue for your honour,’ says my father. ‘And, moreover, I think I was always a sober, riglar gintleman,’ says the squire.

“ ‘That’s your name, sure enough,’ says my father (though it was a big lie for him, but he could not help it).

“ ‘Well,’ says the sperit, ‘although I was as sober as most men—at laste as most gintlemin,’ says he; ‘an’ though I was at different periods a most extempory Christian, and most charitable and inhuman to the poor,’ says he; ‘for all that I’m not as asy where I am now,’ says he, ‘as I had a right to expect,’ says he.

“ ‘An’ more’s the pity,’ says my father. ‘Maybe your honour id wish to have a word with Father Murphy?’

“ ‘Hould your tongue, you misherable bliggard,’ says the squire; ‘it’s not iv my sowl I’m thinkin’—an’ I wondther you’d have the impitence to talk to a gintleman consarnin’ his sowl; and when I want *that* fixed,’ says he, slappin’ his thigh, ‘I’ll go to them that knows what belongs to the likes,’ says he. ‘It’s not my sowl,’ says he, sittin’ down opposite my father; ‘it’s not my sowl that’s annoyin’ me most—I’m unasy on my right leg,’ says he, ‘that I bruk at Glenvarloch cover the day I killed black Barney.’ My father found out afther, it was a favourite horse that fell undher him, afther leapin’ the big fence that runs along by the glin. ‘I hope,’ says my father, ‘your honour’s not unasy about the killin’ iv him?’

“ ‘Hould your tongue, ye fool,’ said the squire, ‘an’ I’ll tell you why I’m unasy on my leg,’ says he. ‘In the place where I spend most iv my time,’ says he, ‘except the little leisüre I have for lookin’ about me here,’ says he, ‘I have to walk a great dale more than I was ever used to,’ says he, ‘and by far more than is good for me either,’ says he; ‘for I must tell you,’ says he, ‘the people where I am is ancommonly fond iv cowl’d wather, for there is nothin’ betther to be had; an’, moreover, the weather is hotter than is altogether plisant,’ says he; ‘and I’m appinted,’ says he, ‘to assist in carryin’ the wather,

an' gets a mighty poor share iv it myself,' says he, 'an' a mighty troublesome, wearin' job it is, I can tell you,' says he; 'for they're all iv them surprisin'ly dthry, an' dthinks it as fast as my legs can carry it,' says he; 'but what kills me intirely,' says he, 'is the wakeness in my leg,' says he, 'an' I want you to give it a pull or two to bring it to shape,' says he; 'and that's the long an' the short iv it,' says he.

" 'Oh, plase your honour,' says my father (for he didn't like to handle the sperit at all), 'I wouldn't have the impidence to do the likes to your honour,' says he; 'it's only to poor crathurs like myself I'd do it to,' says he.

" 'None iv your blarney,' says the squire. 'Here's my leg,' says he, cockin' it up to him—'pull it for the bare life,' says he; 'an' if you don't, by the immortal powers I'll not lave a bone in your carcish I'll not powdher,' says he.

" 'When my father heerd that, he seen there was no use in purtendin', so he tuk hould iv the leg, an' he kep' pullin' an' pullin', till the sweat, God bless us, began to pour down his face.

" 'Pull, you divil!' says the squire.

" 'At your sarvice, your honour,' says my father.

" 'Pull harder,' says the squire. My father pulled like the divil.

" 'I'll take a little sup,' says the squire, rachin' over his hand to the bottle, 'to keep up my courage,' says he, lettin' an to be very wake in himself intirely. But, as cute as he was, he was out here, for he tuk the wrong one. 'Here's to your good health, Terence,' says he; 'an' now pull like the very divil.' An' with that he lifted the bottle of holy wather, but it was hardly to his mouth, whin he let a screech out, you'd think the room id fairly split with it, an' made one chuck that sent the leg clane aff his body in my father's hands. Down wint the squire over the table, an' bang wint my father half-way across the room on his back, upon the flure. Whin he kem to himself the cheerful mornin' sun was shinin' through the windy shutthers, an' he was lyin' flat an his back, with the leg iv one of the great ould chairs pulled clane out iv the socket an' tight in his hand, pintin' up to the ceilin', an' ould Larry fast asleep, an' snorin' as loud as ever. My father wint that mornin' to Father Murphy, an' from that to the day of his death he never neglected confission nor mass, an' what he tould was better believed that he spake av it but seldom. An', as for the squire, that is the sperit, whether it was that he did not like his liquor, or by rason iv the loss iv his leg, he was never known to walk agin."

CANON P. A. SHEEHAN
1852-1918

A THOROUGH GENTLEMAN

SOME time towards the end of the Parliamentary session, 188-, I found myself in London, on the way to Switzerland. I was not long in the great Babylon when I knocked up against an old schoolmate, now developed into an august Member of the British Parliament. It was in the evening, the place was the Strand ; and I remember well what an impression it made upon me when, as we strolled up and down the crowded thoroughfare, he pointed out to me group after group of Irish Members moving quietly along in twos and threes, clearly strangers in a strange land. It was a day off (Wednesday, I think), and I expressed my surprise that they should not seize the opportunity to scatter themselves, and enjoy the hospitality of many houses which would be glad to open their doors to them. My friend smiled.

"There is not one house in London to-night," he said, "that would entertain them ; and what is more, not one of them would accept such entertainment if proffered. It is war time ; and in war you don't sit down to dinner with your enemies."

It impressed me deeply. My heart went out to these Irish guerilleros, isolated and banned on the London streets.

"That reminds me," said my friend, "you and I are not at war, though we had many a tough battle in days gone by. Come along here ; I know a cosy corner where we can dine."

We left the Strand, and he took me along until we came to a modest, but evidently quite new, little French café off Oxford Street. It was pretty full when we entered. There was but one table vacant, far over in a dim, dusky corner, and we at once made our way towards it.

"We get an excellent dinner here," he said, "and at a singularly moderate price."

He lifted his hand, and the waiter came over.

Just then a tall, straight, gentlemanly figure entered the room, and placing his hat upon a rack, he looked around inquiringly. My friend, the Member, caught his eye, and whispering to me :

"That's P——, one of our men, Member for the E—— Division, C—— County," he whistled, and put up his hand.

The gentleman, without divesting himself of his overcoat, came slowly towards us, and when he had come quite close, my friend discovered his mistake.

"I beg a thousand pardons," he said. "In the dusk I quite mistook you for a friend and Parliamentary colleague."

"A most happy mistake," said the gentleman, removing his gloves. "May I be allowed to take advantage of it? I perceive there is no other table unoccupied."

It was awkward; but what can an Irishman do but be civil? My friend said we would both be most happy to have his company, and he at once in a most peremptory, gentlemanly manner ordered soup.

He was quite tall, bald on the crown of his head; he wore a short thick beard, slightly silvered with grey, and he looked excessively delicate. His cheeks were sunken, the cheek-bones quite apparent, and his eyes glowed as the eyes of a consumptive patient enlarge and shine with the progress of the disease. There was a curious blending of hauteur and deference in his manner; and a strange odour exhaled from his clothes, which I could not for a considerable time define.

He took his soup rather too hastily, I thought; and then he rubbed his bread around and around the plate, and ate it almost ravenously.

"He has lived abroad," I thought. "That is not an English custom."

When the waiter brought fish, he sent back the tiny morsel, and looking at the carte, he said: "I see salmon here. Bring me a large slice of salmon, and sauce—mind, sauce!"

Then turning to my friend he said in an altered tone: "So I have the honour of dining with a Member of Parliament?" My friend bowed.

"I have been in pretty high society," he said, picking up some crumbs and eating them, "nay, I have even enjoyed Her Majesty's hospitality, but I have never aspired to be a Member of the Legislature. It is a great honour, sir, to be allowed to dine with you; and I perceive, or rather I presume, you are both Irish?"

"Yes, we are Irish," said my friend laconically.

"Now," said the stranger, taking up his fork and breaking the salmon cutlet before him, "I do not share the insular and narrow prejudices of my countrymen against the Irish. I have been lately the guest of one of your excellent countrymen. He maintained the

national reputation for hospitality. In fact if I could complain of anything, it would be that he was almost too pressing in his attentions. But to resume. I am a travelled man ; I have seen all races and peoples and tongues ; and I have learned to distinguish—what, do you think ? Races ? No !—all races are alike. I have learned to distinguish a gentleman from a cad ! ”

Somehow, we felt flattered ; and we launched at once into a most amiable discussion on the peculiarities of nations and races ; and there was a singular unanimity in our opinions. We thoroughly agreed that there were gentlemen in every country, even amongst the Turks, and when these were mentioned, the stranger became quite heated.

“ The Turks ? ” he said. “ Why, they are the cream of civilisation. Every Turk is a gentleman. They are the only race which, as a race—I am not speaking of individuals merely—maintain dignity, reserve, courtesy. A Turk never presumes, is never disturbed, is always calm, serene, dignified. And if you want to see the perfection of family life, get, if you can, at Cairo or Alexandria, an invitation from some Sheik to his house, and there—well,” he continued, “ I must not tell. It would be ungentlemanly—a breach of hospitality.”

He ate ravenously, voraciously ; but I set it down to his Oriental experiences. He drank nothing, and refused the bottle of Margaux which my friend pushed towards him. “ He is a Mussulman,” I said to myself. “ See, he avoids wine, and he is so enthusiastic.”

In the intervals of the courses, he spoke as rapidly as he had eaten, giving us details of all his travels in Mexico, Guatemala, on the banks of the Ganges, and the Nile. He had marvellous powers of description, and when he talked about the charms of the Desert, the great dark night hanging down with its rich clusters of stars over the Bedouin tents, evening on the Ganges, the sun setting behind the Pyramids, etc., I began to feel that, after all, a man must travel to know. But, then, his pale, emaciated features, stooped shoulders, and short cough told another tale. “ You have gained by your travels,” I said, “ but you have lost somewhat. Your health appears to have suffered.”

“ Quite so,” he replied, “ I *have* suffered.”

“ I perceive,” said my friend, “ that you are using iodine.” The stranger’s fingers were stained a deep brownish red, and his fingernails were rough and jagged.

“ Sir,” said he, “ you are a Sherlock Holmes. Every night, for many weeks, I have had to use tincture of iodine for my lungs.”

This gave me the clue to the singular odour I had noticed hanging around his clothes as he entered.

"And you are using creosote?" I remarked.

"Sir," he said, "you are a brother detective. Yes, I have been using creosote, or coal-tar in some form."

Just here the waiter came round, switching on the electric lamps. The stranger looked slightly disconcerted, and bending across the table he whispered: "You are in possession of the table, sir, and have the right to interfere. Would you kindly tell this waiter to leave us in the dusk? My eyes have suffered from the glare of the desert sands, and that abominable light is particularly hurtful."

The request seemed strange, but my friend complied.

"You don't wish for the light, sir?" the waiter said.

"No, we have light enough," said the Member.

"I beg your par'n, sir," said the waiter, "but this gentleman belongs to your party?"

"Well, ye—es," said the Member. "We have dined together."

"Oh, all right, sir," said the waiter. "We only wanted to know."

The stranger was not disconcerted in the least. He slewed his chair around, sipped his coffee carefully, lit a proffered cigar, and said: "Now, there's another instance of the vast gulf that separates Oriental from Occidental civilisation. You noticed that impertinent question? That would be impossible in the East; just as impossible as that a mere servant should be allowed, nay, compelled to wear the garments of civilisation, and these—the full dress of a gentleman. You perceive the incongruity? Now, in the East, a slave—and that *cochon* is but a slave—would have approached with deference, salaaming to the ground, lifted your right foot, and placed it on his head, salaamed again, and then protested that you were a son of the Prophet, that sunshine was your shadow, that your eyes lighted the stars at night, and that he, your most humble and adoring subject, would think himself privileged to die a thousand deaths at your bidding."

"But that's all bunkum," said my friend the Member.

"Bunkum? Yes," echoed the stranger. "I am not sure," he continued very slowly, as if he had been deeply pained at the expression; but was too gentlemanly to resent it, "that I would have used the expression. But it is expressive; and your remark is quite correct. But is not *bunkum* the oil of life? This old, decrepit, worn-out civilisation would have been shaken to pieces long ago, and after creaking

and moaning enough to make angels or lost angels weep, would have collapsed and lain still for ever were it not for bunkum. What is 'Your Majesty?' Bunkum. 'Your Royal Highness?' Bunkum. 'Your Grace?' Bunkum. 'My Lord?' Bunkum. When the nurse takes the pink and puling baby, who has wandered hither from eternity, to the admiring father and calls it 'a cherub,' 'an angel' it is bunkum. And when the headstone declares that a paragon of all the virtues lies here, it is bunkum. Did it ever occur to you, my dear friend, as you sat on the green benches in the House of Commons and heard a Cabinet Minister address one of your party, which, as you know, he cordially detests, and would sweep into Gehenna without compunction as 'my honourable and learned friend,' that this was bunkum? The only person in your august assembly that is not a lay-figure is the Speaker. No one dare address bunkum to him. He is 'Sir'—no more; but that is the title of a gentleman."

My friend the Member was calmly chuckling to himself at this delightful attack on Society in general, and the Mother of Parliaments in particular.

"Where, then, comes in the difference between Oriental and Occidental bunkum?" continued the stranger, between every furious puff of his cigar.

"Mark! the expression is not mine. I hold you responsible for it. Well, the difference is, that the Orientals are consistent; you are not. The Oriental never forgets himself, never breaks into anger, is never insolent. He does not call you 'Son of the Prophet' to your face and grimace behind your back. He does not welcome you effusively to his house; and, when you are leaving, say: 'Praised be Allah, what a riddance!' He may sometimes, under great provocation, cheat you in a bargain, but it is always done in a gentlemanly manner; and if he does put laudanum in your coffee, at least he calls upon Allah to protect you. But here, whilst you retain all the bunkum—pardon me, the expression is your own—of the East, everything else is vulgar, plebeian, monkeyish; and it reveals itself in such awful *bêtises* as that wretched creature was just now guilty of. But here he comes again, the slave of the lamp and the napkin!"

The waiter approached and proffered to my friend the Member the bill on a salver. As he did so, I saw him give a searching look on the stranger. The latter threw aside the stump of his cigar, and reaching over he said eagerly: "Is my account here?"

"Yes," said the waiter irreverently; "the entire account is on that bill."

"Then I shall pay for all," said the stranger, fumbling in a side-pocket.

The Member had placed a sovereign on the salver and beckoned the waiter away.

"I cannot allow this, sir," said the stranger, deeply offended. "It would be most ungentlemanly to permit a perfect stranger to discharge my debts."

"I wouldn't have taken the liberty," said the Member, "but you didn't resent it when I said we belonged to the same party. Besides it is a way we Irish have."

"Yes, I perceive," said the gentlemanly stranger, and sank into a brown study.

The receipted bill was brought, the waiter tipped, and we stood up to depart, when, in a pitiful way, the stranger stopped us. "Gentlemen," he said, "please be seated one moment, if I may detain you."

He had turned away his head, and it sank low on his breast. The café was empty. The waiters had gone into the kitchen as there was nothing further to be done.

"Your generosity has overpowered me," he said at length. "I don't know where to begin my confession."

Then, as if he were doing a desperate thing and should do it quickly, he said: "You have entertained a gentleman, and—a gaol-bird. I had just come out of prison, starved, emaciated, dying, and—to die! For God is my witness, I was about to seek my bed to-night in the Thames. But, as I passed this place I said, 'I shall dine like a gentleman once more, and then——'"

He paused for a moment, as if trying to remember his feelings.

"You may ask why I was in gaol or a gaol-bird, which implies so much more. It were a tedious story; but I may say at once that I have never been guilty of an ungentlemanly act. I have never done anything beyond what is done every day and night by the *élite* of this city. But you will say I have lied to you, and that is not gentlemanly. No! I have not lied. I have equivocated. I said I had enjoyed Her Majesty's hospitality. So I have. I said that I had been entertained by one of your countrymen, and that he was too pressing in his attentions. It is true. Rourke, or Crooke, or something else, was my warder. I have said that I used iodine. It is true. But that stain," he pointed

to his thumb and fingers, "is not iodine. It is oakum. And the prison odour that clings around me still is not creosote, as your learned friend conjectured, but the odour of tarred rope. You will object that it was not gentlemanly to come in here and order dinner, knowing that I had not the means of paying for it. Bismillah! Is it not done every day hundreds of times in this city by your greatest swells? No gentleman pays for such trifles as dinner or habiliments. He pays for a box at the opera, or a diamond; but for a dinner? Oh no! Of course I know that if I had not had the good fortune to meet you, I should have been flung out upon the pavement and copped instantly. But, then, why quarrel with good fortune? I never do. If I had been copped I should sleep to-night on a dry board instead of the slime of the river. That would have been one gain. But I would have lost an excellent dinner. Well! there's the equilibrium of things."

He stood up. "I now go to my doom; but with the sublime consciousness that I have dined as a gentleman, with gentlemen. And now, one favour more. May I take this cigar?"

The Member nodded. The gentlemanly stranger lighted the cigar leisurely, and smoked for a second or two.

"The favour is this," he said. "To perfect the compliment by allowing me to accompany you to the door. I see these wretched slaves have come in again and are watching us."

"Come along," said the Member. At the door, under the pitiless glare of the pale electric light, all was visible. The soiled collar, the blue melton overcoat white at the elbows and seams, the yellow tips of the fingers showing through the shabby and broken gloves, the silk hat brown and broken—all told their tale.

The stranger turned and said: "Gentlemen, I must not intrude on you any longer. I beg once more to thank you. May Allah protect you!" Then, lifting his shabby hat, he said to my friend, "*Ave Caesar Imperator! moriturus te saluto!*"¹ He strolled leisurely down the crowded thoroughfare, and the odour of the cigar filled the air.

I couldn't help laughing. "That was a bad sell," I said.

"Never mind," said the Member, "you have dined with a gentleman." I did not know how true were his words, until in after years, long after his death, I learned that my friend the Member had that evening parted with his last sovereign to entertain a stranger and a felon.

¹ "Hail, Emperor and Caesar! I, about to die, salute you!" The salutation of the gladiators in the arena.

F. FRANKFORT MOORE

B. 1855

THE COMEDY OF THE OLD LOVE

A STORY OF NELL GWYN

I

"**M**ADAM ELLEN'S *levée* is at this hour, is't not?" said the Duke of Buckingham to one of the many lackeys who formed a bowing line, suggesting a row of scarlet poppies yielding to a persistent wind, as he entered the splendid ante-room to the great *salon*, decorated—rather too profusely—in the latest French style, in Madam Eleanor Gwyn's house in Pall Mall.

"Madam Ellen is at the point of descending, your Grace," replied the major-domo.

"I am the earliest of her visitors," said the Duke. "Will there be a large attendance to-day?"

"Madam does not limit the attendance at her *levées*, your Grace. 'Tis at the card-tables in the evening that only a few are admitted," said the major-domo.

"H'm, I shall wait," remarked his Grace.

The major-domo bowed; not without a due sense of his own importance, as well as of the importance of the visitor.

The Duke strolled about the rooms with smiles that varied as his eye caught the various objects of decoration scattered with ludicrous profusion about the *salon*. Side by side with a masterpiece of French workmanship was a wretched thing of pasteboard and paint, presented to Nell Gwyn by one of the playhouse carpenters. A pair of bronze gilt candelabra worth a fortune stood on pedestals of wood emblazoned with coloured paper. Nell Gwyn's taste was eccentric—to be more exact it might be said to be extremely inclusive.

The Duke was hugely amused, nor was his impression changed when he glanced round, hearing the swish of the *portières*, and saw at the point of entering the lower *salon* two beautiful ladies—their charms were so amply displayed as to place no tax upon the imagination of his Grace. No two ladies of the Court were more generous in this way than the Duchess of Cleveland—lately the Countess of Castlemaine—

and the Duchess of Portsmouth—lately the exquisite Madame de Querouaille, the gift of the French king to the English Court.

"We have not come soon enough," whispered the Duchess of Portsmouth to her Grace of Cleveland.

"Oil and vinegar," murmured the Duke; "a piquant salad for Nelly."

"Ah, Duke, you are early in offering your duty to Madam Ellen, are you not?" said the Duchess of Cleveland quite pleasantly—for her—as the Duke bowed lower than any lackey.

"If I am arraigned on such a charge, I shall claim the privilege of having your Grace beside me in the dock," said he.

"I' faith, we are early," said the Duchess of Portsmouth; "but the Park in the morning is very sweet."

"So that your Grace was compelled to seek an antidote in Nell Gwyn's house?" suggested the Duke.

"And we have found one," cried the Duchess.

"Nay, madam, I said not that you needed an antidote to sweetness; were you not in the companionship of the Duchess of Cleveland?" said the Duke, smiling.

"The Duke of Buckingham hath been round the coffee-houses already. That accounts for his wit," said the Duchess of Cleveland.

"His Grace's wit is of such a quality as proves beyond doubt that none of the coffee-house wits are early risers," remarked the other lady.

"If they are not, madam, they cannot certainly excuse themselves on the ground that they sat up late at a party of the Duchess of Portsmouth's," said the Duke.

"Nay, my parties are not always dull: your Grace is sometimes absent," said the Duchess of Portsmouth.

"That is how I come to be alive to-day. And I fly from your Grace's presence now so that I may be alive to-morrow," cried he, bowing as he passed out through the curtains.

"I'm afraid we must have him as an ally," said the Duchess of Cleveland.

"I think," said the other, "you will find some difficulty in securing as an ally one whose enmity you have cultivated for several years."

"Bah! I can do what I please with men."

The other smiled. Her smile was very irritating—it had the elements of a shrug about it. She only remarked, however, "What can be keeping our friend, Madam Ellen?"

"This orange-woman's brat gives herself the airs of an Empress," said the Duchess of Portsmouth. Then, turning suddenly at the sound of the curtain rings, she cried, "Ah, dear Madam Ellen. What a picture of grace!"

"A picture of grace!" echoed the other.

"Ah, then we are the Three Graces that Mr. Dryden told me of—her Grace the Duchess of Portsmouth, her Grace the Duchess of Cleveland, and me—grace personified by the grace of—of your Graces," cried Nell. Then glancing critically from one to the other of her visitors, she remarked, "I wonder how much of the grace of God there is among the three of us? Dr. Ken, the Canon of Winchester, would have no difficulty appraising it, I fancy."

"The wretch that would not let you lodge in his house," said the Duchess of Cleveland, with well-simulated indignation.

"Ay, that was Dr. Ken. But your Graces have not honoured me with this visit to talk about clergymen."

"Nay, 'tis but a visit of friendship, madam; and converse on theology is no promoter of friendships," said the Duchess of Cleveland.

"Though Madam Ellen's heart is generous enough to make impossible even a quarrel with her on theology," said the other.

"Oh, your Grace overwhelms me," cried Nell, sinking in a curtsy.

"Ah, 'tis true indeed, but alas! generosity may sometimes lead one astray," said the Duchess of Cleveland.

"Is it worth while discussing a point which cannot possibly affect your Grace?" asked Nell.

"Nay, 'tis but in connection with this freak of yours—this hospital for old soldiers, dear child. Are you not urging the King to an act of foolish generosity?" said her Grace.

"'Tis not generosity, madam; 'tis but simple justice," cried Nell.

"Think of the money that it will cost—thousands—tens of thousands," said the French lady.

"Less than His Majesty would throw away in a year upon one of us," replied Nell.

"One of us—one of—oh, yes; of course, but—well, we need it," said her Grace of Cleveland.

"We are not so needy as the poor men who fought for the King and his house."

"Ah, true—true; but I fear that the people will not submit to

the enormous cost of maintaining your hospital," said the Duchess of Cleveland.

"When they submitted to the King's granting you the revenues of the post-office, they will submit to anything," said Nell.

Her Grace of Cleveland took an angry step in the direction of Nell, but Nell stood her ground, and the Duchess refrained from saying the words which had sprung to her lips. She gave a laugh that rang very hollow, and some moments had passed before she said :

"Look you, Madam Ellen ; if you agree to cease urging on the King to waste upon this hospital the money which he would certainly spend upon us, we promise you that within a year you shall be made a Duchess."

"I will promise you this, madam : I will not cease to urge the King to build this hospital even though his courtiers should be left beggars," cried Nell. "And as for your bribe—we have enough Duchesses in this realm to last us for a while. I am Nell Gwyn, daughter of the people, and I seek not to be known by any other name. Every one knows that I am on the side of the English people against all the world. But you, Duchess of Cleveland—you, Madame de Querouaille, are you on the side of the King of England or the King of France ? "

"Bah ! the King of France is stronger than the King of England," cried the Frenchwoman.

"Yes ; but the people of England are stronger than both. Beware of the people of England, Madame de Querouaille," said Nell.

"They are *canaille*, and you—you are one of them, Nell Gwyn." cried the Duchess of Portsmouth.

"Insolent baggage !" shrieked the other Duchess. "You shall die in the gutter from which you sprang, and your boy—ah, you think that the King will be fool enough to ennoble the brat. I know better. He will die a——"

Nell sprang toward her, and she wisely retreated.

"If you say that word which is trembling on your lips, I will tear out the tongue that framed it," said Nell in a whisper. "Take yourself out of my house, foul-mouthed creature ! "

"We are properly repaid for putting ourselves on a level with an orange-girl," cried the Frenchwoman.

"The King shall learn of this," cried the Duchess of Cleveland.

"Tell it to your King, the King of France," cried Nell, as the two ladies dashed through the *portière*.

Left alone in the *salon*, Madam Ellen paced the room excitedly for some time. Then she struck her hands together, crying, "As God is my witness, I will never cease to urge the King to build the hospital. Honours—what care I for honours?—for duchess-ships? The honours of dishonour. Nay, I ask only the honour of having it said of me that I helped on this work for England's soldiers."

The ante-room had by this time become crowded with courtiers anxious to profit by doing her the honour of attending her *levée*.

Through the curtain came a still young officer. He bowed low, and she greeted him cordially.

"Ah, Colonel Churchill, you have not forgotten me in your foreign wars."

"How would that be possible, madam?"

"I cannot conceive it for myself. No man who remembers himself so well as Colonel Churchill does could forget Nell Gwyn. How can I be of help to you, Colonel?"

He went close to her.

"Dear madam, General Crosby is very ill——"

"Ah, I thought that my old friend remembered himself. Well, better that than that he should forget himself. Sir, the King shall hear of your merits before the breath is out of poor Crosby's body."

"With what words——"

"Good morning to you, Colonel—General Churchill."

He retired, bowing low, having kissed her hand, and made way for an elderly gentleman who had come forward.

"Ah, my Lord, I have not been honoured by a visit from your Lordship since—was it since you begged of me to ask the King to make you Warden of the Meres?" said she. "And what help can I be to your Lordship at this time?"

"Madam, 'tis not for myself; I would die, madam, rather than ask favours for myself," he replied with firmness.

"But you have a son."

"The finest young fellow that lives, though I am his father, madam."

"That is not his fault, my Lord. Is it in the Royal Scots or the Life Guards you wish him placed?"

"The Life Guards, dear madam. We are a poor but proud family, madam. Merit only hath advanced us. My boy would scorn to ask

for favours if he once got a start. The Life Guards, dear madam—and, if possible, a captaincy. I may depend on your good word? A thousand thanks. We come of a proud stock, madam. We are poor but proud, madam—my son——”

“ His name shall be put before His Majesty, my Lord.”

The fine old fellow bent low over her hand. Going to the door, he glared back scornfully at the crowd, and muttered, “ Pack of sycophants—pack of sycophants ! ”

She had not heard the petitions of more than half of them when a strange and incongruous figure appeared at the entrance—a middle-aged lady dressed in incomparable finery, but suggesting, among her silks and feathers, the jackdaw masquerading as a peacock. She was remonstrating with the major-domo with great fluency—the fluency of Lewknor Lane.

“ Why shouldn’t I see my daughter at any hour I please, fellow ? ” she was asking.

Madam Ellen laughed, and dismissed her Court.

“ ’Tis my lady mother,” she cried. “ What post can she come to ask for? Ladies and gentlemen, you may all depend on my good word on your behalf. Come now, mother, and tell me all that you have to tell. Heavens, madam, do not tell me that you wish to be made Mistress of the Robes—or Master of the Horse.”

“ Not me—not me,” said Mrs. Gwyn, eyeing the disappearing Court until she was alone with her daughter.

“ I breathe again,” said Nell. “ But I scarce knew that you were journeying hither to-day. ’Tis an honour and a surprise as well ; and i’ faith, now that I come to think on’t, the surprise is a deal greater than the honour. If you say you haven’t come hither for more money, my surprise will be unbounded.”

“ I’m not come for money, though a trifle would be welcome,” said the mother when Nelly had shown her the way into one of the rooms opening off a corridor at one side of the hall.

“ I have met with an old friend of yours this day, Nell,” said the mother, “ and he is coming hither.”

“ An old friend ! I’ faith, good mother, ’tis the young friends are more to my taste. The savour of Lewknor Lane doth not smell sweet.”

“ Oh, ay, but you once wasn’t so dainty a madam.”

“ Twere vain to deny it, mother, since it can be urged against me that I became your daughter. Whom say you that you met to-day ? ”

"What should you say if I told you that his name was Dick Harraden?"

"What, Dick! Dick! Dick Harraden!"

Nell had sprung to her feet, and had grasped her mother by the shoulder, eagerly peering into her face.

After a moment of silence following her exclamation, she gave her mother a little push in the act of taking her hand off her shoulder, and threw herself back in her own chair again with a laugh.

"What should I say, do you ask me?" she cried. "Well, I should say that you were a liar, good mother."

"I'm no liar," said the mother. "'Twas Dick himself I met face to face."

"It puzzles me to see wherein lies your hope of getting money from me by telling me such a tale," said Nell.

"I want not your money—at least, not till the end of the month or thereabouts. I tell you I saw Dick within the hour."

"'Twas his ghost. You know that when he threw away his link he took to the sea and was drowned in a storm off the Grand Canary. What did the seafaring man tell us when I asked him if he had seen Dick?"

"A maudlin knave he was—a very maudlin knave to come with such a tale."

"But he said he had sailed in the same ship as Dick, and that it had gone down with all aboard save only himself."

"Oh, ay; and he wept plentifully when he saw how you wept—ay, the knave! For I saw Dick with these eyes within the hour."

"Oh, mother—and you told him—no, you dursn't tell him——"

"He had just this morning come to London from the Indies, and it was good luck—or ill-luck may be—that made him run against me. He plied me with question after question—all about Nell—his Nell, he called you, if you please."

"His Nell—ah, mother! his Nell! Well, you told him——"

"I told him that you would never more need his aid to buy foot-gear. Lord! Nell, do you mind how he bought you the worsted stockings when you were nigh mad with the chilblains?"

"And you told him. . . . For God's sake say what you told him."

"I didn't mention the King's name—no, I'm loyal to His Majesty, God save him! I only told him that you had given up selling oranges

in the pit of Drury Lane, and had taken to the less reputable part of the house, to wit, the stage."

"Poor Dick! he didn't like to hear that. Oh, if he had stayed at home and carried his link as before, all would have been well."

"What is the wench talking about? Well—all would have been well? And is not all well, you jade? 'Twere rank treason to say else. Isn't this room, with its gilded looking-glasses and painted vases, pretty well for one who has been an orange-girl? The King is a gentleman—and a merry gentleman too. Well, indeed!"

"But Dick—what more did you say to him, mother?"

"I asked him after himself, to be sure. I' faith, the lad hath prospered, Nell. He will tell you all himself."

"What! you told him where I dwelt?"

"I meant it not, Nelly; but he had it from me before I was aware. But he knows nothing. He will have no time to hear of the King and the King's fancies before he sees you."

"He is coming hither, then? No, he must not come; oh, he shall not come. Mother, you have played me false."

"I? Oh, the wench is mad! False? What could I say, 'girl, when he pressed me?"

"You could have said that I was dead—that would have been the truth. The girl he knew is dead. He must not come to this house."

"Then give your lackeys orders not to admit him and all will be well."

"I'll not see him. Did he say he'd come soon?"

"Within the hour, he said."

Instinctively Nell looked at her reflection in a mirror.

"I'll not see him," she repeated.

"That gown will do well enough for one just returned from the Indies," said the mother.

"Oh, go away; go away," cried her daughter. "You have done enough mischief for one morning. Why could not you have let things be? Oh, go away; go away!"

"Oh, yes; I'll go. And you'll see him, too; no fear about that. And so good-day to you, good Mistress Eve."

She made a mock curtsy and marched out of the room.

Her daughter watched her departure, and only when she had disappeared burst into a laugh. In a moment she was grave once

again. She remained seated without changing her attitude or expression for a long time. At last she sprang to her feet, saying out loud:

"What a fool thou art, friend Nell, to become glum over a boy sweetheart—and a link-boy, of all boys. But I'll not see him. 'Twere best not. He'll hear all soon enough, and loathe me as at times I loathe myself. No, no; not so much as that—not so much as that: Dick had always a kind heart. No, I'll not see him."

She went resolutely to the bell-pull, but, when there, stood irresolute with the ornamental ring of brass in her hand for some moments before pulling it. She gave it a sudden jerk, and when it was responded to by a lackey, she said:

"Should a man call, asking to see me, within the next hour, he is to be told—with civility, mind you; he is a gentleman—that—that I am in this room, and that I will see him for five minutes—only five minutes, mind you, sirrah."

"And the man—the gentleman—is to be admitted, madam?"

"Certainly—for five minutes."

"Your ladyship will regulate the time?"

"Go away, you numskull! How could I regulate the time? I'm no astronomer."

"Madam, I meant but to inquire if you are to be interrupted at the end of five minutes."

"I gave you no such instruction, sirrah. It is enough for you to carry out the instruction I gave you. Carry it out and yourself into the bargain."

The man bowed and withdrew.

When he had gone Nelly laughed again, but suddenly became graver even than she had yet been.

"What have I done?" she cried. "Oh, there never was so great a fool as me. No, no; I'll not see him. I have as kind a heart as Dick, and I'll prove it by not seeing him."

And yet, when she had her hand on the lock of the door, she stood irresolute once again for some moments. Then she went out with a firm step, her intention being to countermand in the hall the instructions she had given to the servant in the parlour; but in the hall she found herself face to face with her old friend Sir Charles Sedley. He had brought her a bunch of violets.

"The satyr offers flowers to Aurora," said the courtier, bowing as gracefully as a touch of rheumatism permitted him.

"And Aurora was so fond of flowers that she accepted them even from the most satiric of satyrs," said Nell, sinking into a curtsy.

They were standing apart from the group of servants in the hall. Nell Gwyn had pretended that she was about to ascend the stairs, but loitered on the second step with her right elbow resting on the oak banister while she smelt at the violets with her head poised daintily as she looked with eyes full of mischief and mirth at the courtier standing on the mat.

Suddenly Nell straightened herself as she looked down the hall towards the door—she started and dropped her violets. All the mischief and mirth fled from her eyes as a man was admitted, with some measure of protestation, by the porter. He was a young man with a very brown face, and he carried no sword, only the hanger of a sailor; his dress was of the plainest.

Before Sir Charles had time to turn to satisfy himself as to the identity of the man at whom Nell was gazing so eagerly, she had run down the hall and seized the new-comer by both hands, crying:

"Dick—Dick—it is you yourself, Dick, and no ghost!"

"No ghost, I dare swear, Nell," cried the man in a tone that made the candles in the chandelier quiver. "No ghost, but—oh, Lord, how you've grown, Nell! Why, when I burnt my last link seeing you home you was only so high." He put his hand within a foot of the floor.

"And you, too, Dick! Why! you're a man now—you'll grow no more, Dick," cried Nell, still standing in front of him with his hands fast clasped in her own. Suddenly, recollecting the servants who were around, she dropped his hands saying: "Come along within, Dick, and tell me all your adventures since last we were together."

"Lord! Adventures! You don't know what you've set yourself down for, Nell. If I was to tell you all I should be in your company for at least a week."

She led him past Sir Charles Sedley without so much as glancing at the courtier, and the new-comer had no eyes for any one save Nell. A servant threw open the door of the room where she had been with her mother, and the two entered.

Sir Charles took snuff elaborately, after he had replaced his hat on his head.

"If His Majesty should arrive, let him know that I am in the long parlour," he said to a servant as he walked toward a door on the left.

He paused for a space with his hand on the handle of the door, for

there came from the room into which Nell Gwyn and Dick Harraden had gone a loud peal of laughter—not a solo, but a duet.

He turned the handle.

So soon as he had disappeared there came a second ripple of laughter from the other room, and the lackeys lounging in the hall laughed too.

II

Within the room Nell was seated on the settee and Dick Harraden by her side. She had just reminded him of the gift of the worsted stockings which he had made to her when he was a link-boy and she an orange-girl in Drury Lane. They had both laughed when she had pushed out a little dainty shoe from beneath her gown, as she said :

“ Ah, Dick, 'tis not in worsted my toes are clad now. I have outgrown your stockings.”

“ Not you, Nell ! ” he cried. “ By the Lord Harry ! your feet have got smaller instead of larger during these years—I swear to you that is so.”

“ Ah, the chilblains do make a difference, Dick,” said she ; “ and you never saw my feet unless they were covered with chilblains. Lord ! how you cried when you saw my feet well covered for the first time.”

“ Not I—I didn't cry. What was there to cry about, Nell ? ” he said.

She felt very much inclined to ask him the same question at that moment, for his face was averted from her, and he had uttered his words spasmodically.

“ Poor Dick ! you wept because you had eaten nothing for three days in order to save enough to buy my stockings,” she said.

“ How know you that ? ” he cried, turning to her suddenly.

“ I knew it not at the time,” she replied, “ but I have thought over it since.”

“ Think no more of it, Nell. Oh, Lord, to think that I should live to see Nell again ! No—no. I'll not believe it. That fine lady that I see in the big glass yonder cannot be Nell Gwyn.”

“ Oh, Dick, would any one but Nell Gwyn remember about Nell Gwyn's chilblains ? ”

“ Hearsay—mere hearsay, my fine madam ! ”

“ By what means shall I convince you that I'm the Nell you knew ? ”

Let me see—ah, I know. Dick, I'll swear for you ; you know well that there was no one could match me in swearing. Let me but begin."

" Oh, Lord ! not for the world. You always knew when to begin, Nell, but you ne'er knew when to stop. And how doth it come that you haven't forgot the brimstone of the Lane, Nelly, though you have become so mighty fine a lady ? "

" 'Snails, Dick, the best way to remember a language is to keep constantly talking it."

" But in silks and satins ? "

" Oh, I soon found that I only needed to double the intensity of my language in the Lane in order to talk the mother-tongue of fashion."

" If swearing make the fine lady you'll be the leader of the town, Nell, I'll warrant. But don't say that you doubled your language—that would be impossible."

" Oh, would it indeed ? "

" Not so ? Then, for God's sake, don't give me a sample of what you reached in that way, for I've only lived among the pirates and buccaneers of the Indies since."

" Then I'll e'en spare thee, Dick ; but take warning : don't provoke me. You wouldn't provoke a pirate whose guns you knew to be double-shotted. Don't say that I'm not Nell Gwyn for all my silks and lace. Why, man, doth oatmeal porridge cease to be porridge because it's served in a silver platter ? Did your salt pork turn to venison when you ate it off the gold plate that you stole from the chapels ? "

" Lord, Nell, I wasn't a pirate."

" What ! Didn't you say just now that you had been among pirates and buccaneers in the Indies ? "

" I was among them, but not of them."

" You mean to say that you were neither a pirate nor a buccaneer ? "

" Neither."

" Then all I can say is that I'm mightily ashamed of you, Dick. I counted on your being at least a pirate. Don't say that you became a merchant ; I never could abide dishonesty, Dick."

" Well, no ; I never became just a merchant, Nell—at least, not the sort of merchant that merchants would call a merchant."

" Oh, then there's some hope for you yet, Dick. We may be friends still."

" Friends ? Well, I should say so. What did I work for, do

you think, through all these years? What did I lay up a store of guineas for—guineas and Spanish doubloons and pieces of eight for——?”

“And you have made a fortune, Dick? Think of that! Ah, I fear that you must have been a regular merchant after all; only regular merchants make fortunes in these days.”

“Ay, but some irregular ones do pretty fairly for themselves.”

“And you were somewhat irregular, I dare swear?”

“Well, I wasn’t regularly irregular, dear; only by fits and starts. Ah, what I said to myself was: I’ve put the stockings on Nell, but I’ve to get new shoes for her yet. That’s what gave me the strength of ten men—working for those new shoes, Nell.”

“Poor Dick! and now when you come home you find that I am already provided for.”

Again she showed him the dainty tips of her shoes.

“Those are fair-weather shoes, Nell,” he cried.

“Ay, that they are, Dick,” she assented with a note of sadness in her voice.

“But what I would offer you would stand the stress of all weather—fair or foul, Nell.”

“I believe you, Dick, with all my heart. I know what you had to offer me; but it’s too late now—too late, Dick.”

“Too late? What do you mean, girl?”

The look that came into his face frightened her. She threw herself back on the settee and laughed loudly for a minute or two.

“That’s what I mean,” she cried, tilting up her toes until they were on a level with his knees. “What else could I mean than that I’m already sufficiently shod? Even Nell Gwyn can’t wear more than one pair of shoes at one time, Dick. It’s rather a pity, but it’s an ill that must be borne! Now tell us about yourself, Dick. Tell us how you fought with pirates and buccaneers—above all, tell us what the Spanish Main is.”

“The Spanish Main—why it’s the Spanish Main to be sure—south of the Indies—a good place for trade, and a good place for pirates. But you, Nell; I wonder if you meant anything by saying that I had come back too late? I thought, you know, when I met your mother——”

“Oh, I want to hear about the fighting—the buccaneers. I don’t want to hear about my mother. I hear enough about her. You

fought the pirates? Well, next to being a pirate yourself that's the best thing."

"Well, if you must know, I got about me a few score of lads—most of them were stout Irish lads—who were sold to the plantations by Cromwell."

"The monster!"

"Ay, we made up a fine crew, I can tell you. Our plan was to do no pirating on our own behalf, but only to attack the pirates when they had a deckload of spoil. Taking from thieves isn't stealing, is it, Nell?"

"No, that's business."

"A bit irregular it may be, as I said just now; but bless you, Nelly, it was like sermon-preaching compared to some sorts of business that thrive mightily at the Indies. Anyhow, here I am to-day, sound and hearty, Nell, with a pretty nice fortune made already, and more to come—here I am, ready and willing to buy you the best pair of shoes in London town, and every other article of attire you may need for the next dozen—ay, the next fifty years."

"Dick—Dick!"

"Isn't it true that you were always my sweetheart, Nell? Didn't you say that you would never marry another? Well, you've kept your word so far—your mother told me that."

"Ah, that's the worst of it."

"The worst of it! That's the best of it, Nelly; for though a fine lady living in a mansion like this—why it might be a palace—the King himself might come here."

"The King—you've heard that—that the King——" She grasped him fiercely by the sleeve, and was eagerly peering into his face.

He burst out laughing, but suddenly checked himself.

"The King—the King—what was there for me to hear?" he asked in a low voice. "I only arrived from Bristol port in the morning. How could I hear anything? I don't want to hear anything except to hear you say that you haven't broken your promise—that you haven't married any one else."

"Oh, go away, Dick—go away!" she cried, burying her face on the arm of the settee.

He got upon his feet slowly and painfully, and stood over her.

"Why should I go away?" he asked in the same grave voice.

"If I love you—and you know I do—and if you love me—and I believe

that you do—it is not for me to go away. Ah, is it possible that you have given your promise to marry some one else! Don't weep, Nell; that's it, I see, and it can be made all right. Is that it, dear?"

"No, no. Oh, go away—go away, and never return to make me feel how miserable I am!"

"I'll not go away. There's some mystery about you and this house, and I'll not go before I fathom it."

She looked up and saw him standing there with his arms folded.

She leapt up so quickly that she almost seemed to spring into his arms. He thought so at any rate, and was about to clasp her when she caught both of his hands in her own, gazing tearfully—eagerly—wistfully into his face.

"Dick—dear Dick," she said, "if you love me still—and I know you do—you will leave me now. Oh, you should never have come here—I did not mean you to come; but, if you love me, Dick, you will leave me now—leave me and go into the nearest coffee-house and ask of the first man you see there who is Nell Gwyn—what is Nell Gwyn. If you return to me after that, then—then, Dick, I swear to you that I'll marry you—there will be none to stay us then—none to come between—the King himself shall not come between us."

He gripped her hands fiercely, his face close down to hers.

"By God, I'll do it!" he said through his set teeth. "I'll do it. You have put it upon me. I know that I shall hear nothing but what is good of you, and I'll return to claim you as sure as there's a sun in heaven."

He dropped her hands, snatched up his hat, and walked firmly to the door. When there he turned slowly and looked back at her. She was standing pale and lovely where he had left her. Her eyes were upon his face.

He flung himself through the door, and she fell on her knees beside the settee, burying her face in one of its cushions.

For some minutes nothing was heard in the room but the sound of her sobs; but then the silence was broken by a shout outside—a shout and the noise of a scuffle. Cries of "Hold him back! Hold him back!" came from the servants, mixed with some full-bodied imprecations in other voices. Nell started to her feet as the door of the room was all but crashed in, and she was standing with a startled look on her face as the door was flung wide, and Dick Harraden hurled a limp antagonist into the room.

"He shall eat his words—every foul word he uttered he shall swallow in the presence of Nell herself," cried Dick, and then Nell recognised Sir Charles Sedley as the man who was standing panting, with a broken sword in his hand, by her side, facing Dick.

"For God's sake, Dick!—Sir Charles—what has happened?"

The courtier was too breathless to speak—he signified so much very pleasingly to Nell.

"The cowardly knave!" panted Dick. "But I swore that I'd make him eat his words, and by the Lord Harry I'll keep my oath."

"Sir Charles, pray—oh, Dick!"

"Dick me no Dicks, Nell, until this popinjay has gone down on his knees before you and asked your pardon for his foul words," cried Dick. "Down you go, my gentleman, were you fifty times Sir Charles!"

"For Heaven's sake, Nell, keep that fire-eater at a distance," gasped Sir Charles. "He's fit for Bedlam."

"Stand where you be, Dick," said Nell. "What said Sir Charles Sedley to give you offence?"

"He said that you—no, I'll hang in chains in Execution Dock before I repeat the lie—but he'll take it back—every word, if I have to wring his neck."

Dick was with difficulty kept at a distance.

"Did he say aught about the King and me?" asked Nell in a low voice.

"It was, I swear, a most unhappy *contretemps*, Nell," said Sir Charles, smiling in a somewhat constrained way. "How could I know that there was one man in England who didn't know how splendid, yet how natural, a conquest the charms of Mistress Eleanor Gwyn have achieved?"

"Then you only spoke the truth, Sir Charles," said Nell.

"God above us!"

Dick staggered back and grasped the frame of a chair to support himself.

There was a long silence.

He took a faltering step or two towards where she stood in the middle of the room.

"I see it all now," he said in a low voice. "I see it all. This house—the lackeys in scarlet—the King's servants—they are the King's servants, and you—you, Nell, are the King's—oh, God—let me die—"

let me die ! This is what I came home for—you told me to go to the first coffee-house—I didn't need to go so far. Oh, Nelly, if I had come home to stand beside the green hillock of your grave I could have borne it—but this—this ! ”

He dropped into a chair and covered his face with his hands. His sobbing was the only sound in the room.

After a long pause he got slowly upon his feet.

“ I'm going away,” he said. “ My heart is broken, Nell—my heart is broken. Good-bye, Nell.”

“ Good-bye, Dick.”

She had not moved from the middle of the room. She did not hold out a hand to him. He walked slowly to the door. Then he turned round.

“ I humbly ask your pardon, sir,” he said to Sir Charles.

“ Sir,” said the courtier, “ I honour you more than any living man.”

“ Nell—Nell—come to me—come away with me—come to my arms, Nell,” cried the man, holding out his hands to her from where he stood.

Sir Charles watched her face. He saw it light up for a moment. Her hands moved ; she was going to him.

No, she only looked at the man who loved her and was ready to offer her everything, and said :

“ Dick, I have a boy in a cradle upstairs.”

There was another long pause before Dick whispered the words : “ God bless thee, Nell ! ”

Then the door was flung wide in his face by a lackey who bowed to the ground as he ushered in a rather plain-faced man wearing a diamond star and a broad blue sash as well as a diamond garter.

Nell sank in a curtsy and Sir Charles Sedley made an obeisance. Dick remained unmoved.

“ Ha—what have we here ? ” said the stranger. “ I' faith, a pretty family picture ! Who may you be, good sir ? ” he asked of Dick.

“ Who may you be ? ” asked Dick.

“ Well, who I may be in a year or two the Lord and Nelly only know—she says a merry pauper. But who I am is easier said ; I happen just now to be the King.”

Dick stood unmoved.

“ Then I could tell you what you are, sir,” said Dick.

“ Not half as well as I could tell you, my friend,” said the King.

“ I wonder if your Majesty ever hears the truth,” said Dick.

"Seldom ; any time I do it comes from the lips of Nelly yonder," replied the King. "And by my soul, sir, I would rather hear the truth from Nelly than a lie from the most honourable of my subjects."

"Profligate !" cried Dick.

"I answer to that name, sir ; what then ?" said the King.

"What then ? God only can reply to your 'What then ?' The answer rests with Him. He will not forget to answer you when His time comes."

"Even so," said the King in a low tone, bending his head.

Sir Charles had moved round the settee and had opened the door. He touched Dick on the elbow. Dick started for a moment, and then stalked through the door. Sir Charles went out with his face turned toward the King.

"A straightforward fellow, but as conceited as a Puritan, Nell," cried the King, with a laugh.

But Nell had sunk once more on her knees beside the settee, and her face was, as before, buried in the cushion.

"Ha, what's this, Nelly ? What's amiss ?" said the King, bending over her.

"Oh, go away—go away ; I never want to see you again. You heard the word—Profligate ! Profligate !"

"I'll go away, Nell, so soon as I pass to you the two papers which I hold in my hand."

"I want no papers. I want to be alone."

"Come, dear child. See if you will like your new plaything."

He pushed before her one of the two papers which he held.

She glanced at it without rising, and without taking it from him. Suddenly she put out a hand to it.

"What ?" she cried. She was now on her feet. "You have done it for me—all for me ! The hospital to be built at Chelsea. Oh, my liege !"

"Now the other paper," said the King.

She took it from him.

"Ah, Royal Letters Patent—our boy—our Charlie—Duke of St. Albans ! Oh, my liege—my King—my love for ever !"

She sank on her knees, and, catching his hand, covered it with kisses—with kisses and tears.

OSCAR WILDE

1856-1900

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA

IT was the birthday of the Infanta. She was just twelve years of age, and the sun was shining brightly in the gardens of the palace.

Although she was a real Princess and the Infanta of Spain, she had only one birthday every year, just like the children of quite poor people, so it was naturally a matter of great importance to the whole country that she should have a really fine day for the occasion. And a really fine day it certainly was. The tall striped tulips stood straight up upon their stalks, like long rows of soldiers, and looked defiantly across the grass at the roses, and said: "We are quite as splendid as you are now." The purple butterflies fluttered about with gold dust on their wings, visiting each flower in turn; the little lizards crept out of the crevices of the wall, and lay basking in the white glare; and the pomegranates split and cracked with the heat, and showed their bleeding red hearts. Even the pale yellow lemons, that hung in such profusion from the mouldering trellis and along the dim arcades, seemed to have caught a richer colour from the wonderful sunlight, and the magnolia trees opened their great globe-like blossoms of folded ivory, and filled the air with a sweet heavy perfume.

The little Princess herself walked up and down the terrace with her companions, and played at hide-and-seek round the stone vases and the old moss-grown statues. On ordinary days she was only allowed to play with children of her own rank, so she had always to play alone, but her birthday was an exception, and the King had given orders that she was to invite any of her young friends whom she liked to come and amuse themselves with her. There was a stately grace about these slim Spanish children as they glided about, the boys with their large-plumed hats and short fluttering cloaks, the girls holding up the trains of their long brocaded gowns, and shielding the sun from their eyes with huge fans of black and silver. But the Infanta was the most graceful of all, and the most tastefully attired, after the somewhat cumbrous fashion of the day. Her robe was of grey satin, the

skirt and the wide puffed sleeves heavily embroidered with silver, and the stiff corset studded with rows of fine pearls. Two tiny slippers with big pink rosettes peeped out beneath her dress as she walked. Pink and pearl was her great gauze fan, and in her hair, which like an aureole of faded gold stood out stiffly round her pale little face, she had a beautiful white rose.

From a window in the palace the sad melancholy King watched them. Behind him stood his brother, Don Pedro of Aragon, whom he hated, and his confessor, the Grand Inquisitor of Granada, sat by his side. Sadder even than usual was the King, for as he looked at the Infanta bowing with childish gravity to the assembling courtiers, or laughing behind her fan at the grim Duchess of Albuquerque who always accompanied her, he thought of the young Queen, her mother, who but a short time before—so it seemed to him—had come from the gay country of France, and had withered away in the sombre splendour of the Spanish court, dying just six months after the birth of her child, and before she had seen the almonds blossom twice in the orchard, or plucked the second year's fruit from the old gnarled fig-tree that stood in the centre of the now grass-grown courtyard. So great had been his love for her that he had not suffered even the grave to hide her from him. She had been embalmed by a Moorish physician, who in return for this service had been granted his life, which for heresy and suspicion of magical practices had been already forfeited, men said, to the Holy Office, and her body was still lying on its tapestried bier in the black marble chapel of the Palace, just as the monks had borne her in on that windy March day nearly twelve years before. Once every month the King, wrapped in a dark cloak and with a muffled lantern in his hand, went in and knelt by her side calling out, "*Mi reina! Mi reina!*" and sometimes breaking through the formal etiquette that in Spain governs every separate action of life, and sets limits even to the sorrow of a King, he would clutch at the pale jewelled hands in a wild agony of grief, and try to wake by his mad kisses the cold painted face.

To-day he seemed to see her again, as he had seen her first at the Castle of Fontainebleau, when he was but fifteen years of age, and she still younger. They had been formally betrothed on that occasion by the Papal Nuncio in the presence of the French King and all the Court, and he had returned to the Escorial bearing with him a little ringlet of yellow hair, and the memory of two childish lips bending down to

kiss his hand as he stepped into his carriage. Later on had followed the marriage, hastily performed at Burgos, a small town on the frontier between the two countries, and the grand public entry into Madrid with the customary celebration of high mass at the Church of La Atocha, and a more than usually solemn *auto-da-fé*, in which nearly three hundred heretics, amongst whom were many Englishmen, had been delivered over to the secular arm to be burned.

Certainly he had loved her madly, and to the ruin, many thought, of his country, then at war with England for the possession of the empire of the New World. He had hardly ever permitted her to be out of his sight ; for her he had forgotten, or seemed to have forgotten, all grave affairs of State ; and, with that terrible blindness that passion brings upon its servants, he had failed to notice that the elaborate ceremonies by which he sought to please her did but aggravate the strange malady from which she suffered. When she died he was, for a time, like one bereft of reason. Indeed; there is no doubt but that he would have formally abdicated and retired to the great Trappist monastery at Granada, of which he was already titular Prior, had he not been afraid to leave the little Infanta at the mercy of his brother, whose cruelty, even in Spain, was notorious, and who was suspected by many of having caused the Queen's death by means of a pair of poisoned gloves that he had presented to her on the occasion of her visiting his castle in Aragon. Even after the expiration of the three years of public mourning that he had ordained throughout his whole dominions by royal edict, he would never suffer his ministers to speak about any new alliance, and when the Emperor himself sent to him, and offered him the hand of the lovely Archduchess of Bohemia, his niece, in marriage, he bade the ambassadors tell their master that the King of Spain was already wedded to Sorrow, and that though she was but a barren bride he loved her better than Beauty ; an answer that cost his crown the rich provinces of the Netherlands, which soon after, at the Emperor's instigation, revolted against him under the leadership of some fanatics of the Reformed Church.

His whole married life, with its fierce, fiery-coloured joys and the terrible agony of its sudden ending, seemed to come back to him to-day as he watched the Infanta playing on the terrace. She had all the Queen's pretty petulance of manner, the same wilful way of tossing her head, the same proud curved beautiful mouth, the same wonderful smile—*vrai sourire de France* indeed—as she glanced up now and then

at the window, or stretched out her little hand for the stately Spanish gentlemen to kiss. But the shrill laughter of the children grated on his ears, and the bright pitiless sunlight mocked his sorrow, and a dull odour of strange spices, spices such as embalmers use, seemed to taint—or was it fancy?—the clear morning air. He buried his face in his hands, and when the Infanta looked up again the curtains had been drawn, and the King had retired.

She made a little *moue* of disappointment, and shrugged her shoulders. Surely he might have stayed with her on her birthday. What did the stupid State affairs matter? Or had he gone to that gloomy chapel, where the candles were always burning, and where she was never allowed to enter? How silly of him, when the sun was shining so brightly, and everybody was so happy! Besides, he would miss the sham bull-fight for which the trumpet was already sounding, to say nothing of the puppet-show and the other wonderful things. Her uncle and the Grand Inquisitor were much more sensible. They had come out on the terrace, and paid her nice compliments. So she tossed her pretty head, and taking Don Pedro by the hand, she walked slowly down the steps towards a long pavilion of purple silk that had been erected at the end of the garden, the other children following in strict order of precedence, those who had the longest names going first.

A procession of noble boys, fantastically dressed as *toreadors*, came out to meet her, and the young Count of Tierra-Nueva, a wonderfully handsome lad of about fourteen years of age, uncovering his head with all the grace of a born hidalgo and grandee of Spain, led her solemnly in to a little gilt and ivory chair that was placed on a raised dais above the arena. The children grouped themselves all round, fluttering their big fans and whispering to each other, and Don Pedro and the Grand Inquisitor stood laughing at the entrance. Even the Duchess—the Camerera-Mayor as she was called—a thin, hard-featured woman with a yellow ruff, did not look quite so bad-tempered as usual, and something like a chill smile flitted across her wrinkled face and twitched her thin bloodless lips.

It certainly was a marvellous bull-fight, and much nicer, the Infanta thought, than the real bull-fight that she had been brought to see at Seville, on the occasion of the visit of the Duke of Parma to her father. Some of the boys pranced about on richly-caparisoned hobby-horses brandishing long javelins with gay streamers of bright ribands attached

to them ; others went on foot waving their scarlet cloaks before the bull, and vaulting lightly over the barrier when he charged them ; and as for the bull himself, he was just like a live bull, though he was only made of wicker-work and stretched hide, and sometimes insisted on running round the arena on his hind legs, which no live bull ever dreams of doing. He made a splendid fight of it too, and the children got so excited that they stood up upon the benches, and waved their lace handkerchiefs and cried out : *Bravo toro ! Bravo toro !* just as sensibly as if they had been grown-up people. At last, however, after a prolonged combat, during which several of the hobby-horses were gored through and through, and their riders dismounted, the young Count of Tierra-Nueva brought the bull to his knees, and having obtained permission from the Infanta to give the *coup de grâce*, he plunged his wooden sword into the neck of the animal with such violence that the head came right off, and disclosed the laughing face of little Monsieur de Lorraine, the son of the French Ambassador at Madrid.

The arena was then cleared amidst much applause, and the dead hobby-horses dragged solemnly away by two Moorish pages in yellow and black liveries, and after a short interlude, during which a French posture-master performed upon the tight-rope, some Italian puppets appeared in the semi-classical tragedy of *Sophonisba* on the stage of a small theatre that had been built up for the purpose. They acted so well, and their gestures were so extremely natural, that at the close of the play the eyes of the Infanta were quite dim with tears. Indeed some of the children really cried, and had to be comforted with sweetmeats, and the Grand Inquisitor himself was so affected that he could not help saying to Don Pedro that it seemed to him intolerable that things made simply out of wood and coloured wax, and worked mechanically by wires, should be so unhappy and meet with such terrible misfortunes.

An African juggler followed, who brought in a large flat basket covered with a red cloth, and having placed it in the centre of the arena, he took from his turban a curious reed pipe, and blew through it. In a few moments the cloth began to move, and as the pipe grew shriller and shriller two green and gold snakes put out their strange wedge-shaped heads and rose slowly up, swaying to and fro with the music as a plant sways in the water. The children, however, were rather frightened at their spotted hoods and quick darting tongues, and were much more pleased when the juggler made a tiny orange-tree grow out

of the sand and bear pretty white blossoms and clusters of real fruit ; and when he took the fan of the little daughter of the Marquess de Las-Torres, and changed it into a blue bird that flew all round the pavilion and sang, their delight and amazement knew no bounds. The solemn minuet, too, performed by the dancing boys from the church of Nuestra Señora Del Pilar, was charming. The Infanta had never before seen this wonderful ceremony which takes place every year at Maytime in front of the high altar of the Virgin, and in her honour ; and indeed none of the royal family of Spain had entered the great cathedral of Saragossa since a mad priest, supposed by many to have been in the pay of Elizabeth of England, had tried to administer a poisoned wafer to the Prince of the Asturias. So she had known only by hearsay of " Our Lady's Dance," as it was called, and it certainly was a beautiful sight. The boys wore old-fashioned court dresses of white velvet, and their curious three-cornered hats were fringed with silver and surmounted with huge plumes of ostrich feathers, the dazzling whiteness of their costumes, as they moved about in the sunlight, being still more accentuated by their swarthy faces and long black hair. Everybody was fascinated by the grave dignity with which they moved through the intricate figures of the dance, and by the elaborate grace of their slow gestures, and stately bows, and when they had finished their performance and doffed their great plumed hats to the Infanta, she acknowledged their reverence with much courtesy, and made a vow that she would send a large wax candle to the shrine of Our Lady of Pilar in return for the pleasure that she had given her.

A troop of handsome Egyptians—as the gipsies were termed in those days—then advanced into the arena, and sitting down cross-legs, in a circle, began to play softly upon their zithers, moving their bodies to the tune, and humming, almost below their breath, a low dreamy air. When they caught sight of Don Pedro they scowled at him, and some of them looked terrified, for only a few weeks before he had had two of their tribe hanged for sorcery in the market-place at Seville, but the pretty Infanta charmed them as she leaned back peeping over her fan with her great blue eyes, and they felt sure that one so lovely as she was could never be cruel to anybody. So they played on very gently and just touching the cords of the zithers with their long pointed nails, and their heads began to nod as though they were falling asleep. Suddenly, with a cry so shrill that all the children were startled and Don Pedro's hand clutched at the agate pommel of his dagger, they

leapt to their feet and whirled madly round the enclosure beating their tambourines, and chaunting some wild love-song in their strange guttural language. Then at another signal they all flung themselves again to the ground and lay there quite still, the dull strumming of the zithers being the only sound that broke the silence. After they had done this several times, they disappeared for a moment and came back leading a brown shaggy bear by a chain, and carrying on their shoulders some little Barbary apes. The bear stood upon his head with the utmost gravity, and the wizened apes played all kinds of amusing tricks with two gipsy boys who seemed to be their masters, and fought with tiny swords, and fired off guns, and went through a regular soldier's drill just like the King's own bodyguard. In fact the gipsies were a great success.

But the funniest part of the whole morning's entertainment was undoubtedly the dancing of the little Dwarf. When he stumbled into the arena, waddling on his crooked legs and wagging his huge misshapen head from side to side, the children went off into a loud shout of delight, and the Infanta herself laughed so much that the Camerera was obliged to remind her that although there were many precedents in Spain for a King's daughter weeping before her equals, there were none for a Princess of the blood royal making so merry before those who were her inferiors in birth. The Dwarf, however, was really quite irresistible, and even at the Spanish Court, always noted for its cultivated passion for the horrible, so fantastic a little monster had never been seen. It was his first appearance, too. He had been discovered only the day before, running wild through the forest, by two of the nobles who happened to have been hunting in a remote part of the great cork-wood that surrounded the town, and had been carried off by them to the Palace as a surprise for the Infanta ; his father, who was a poor charcoal-burner, being but too well pleased to get rid of so ugly and useless a child. Perhaps the most amusing thing about him was his complete unconsciousness of his own grotesque appearance. Indeed he seemed quite happy and full of the highest spirits. When the children laughed, he laughed as freely and as joyously as any of them, and at the close of each dance he made them each the funniest of bows, smiling and nodding at them just as if he was really one of themselves, and not a little misshapen thing that Nature, in some humorous mood, had fashioned for others to mock at. As for the Infanta, she absolutely fascinated him. He could not keep his eyes off her, and seemed to

dance for her alone, and when at the close of the performance, remembering how she had seen the great ladies of the Court throw bouquets to Caffarelli, the famous Italian treble, whom the Pope had sent from his own chapel to Madrid that he might cure the King's melancholy by the sweetness of his voice, she took out of her hair the beautiful white rose, and partly for a jest and partly to tease the Camerera, threw it to him across the arena with her sweetest smile, he took the whole matter quite seriously, and pressing the flower to his rough coarse lips he put his hand upon his heart, and sank on one knee before her, grinning from ear to ear, and with his little bright eyes sparkling with pleasure.

This so upset the gravity of the Infanta that she kept on laughing long after the little Dwarf had run out of the arena, and expressed a desire to her uncle that the dance should be immediately repeated. The Camerera, however, on the plea that the sun was too hot, decided that it would be better that her Highness should return without delay to the Palace, where a wonderful feast had been already prepared for her, including a real birthday cake with her own initials worked all over it in painted sugar and a lovely silver flag waving from the top. The Infanta accordingly rose up with much dignity, and having given orders that the little Dwarf was to dance again for her after the hour of siesta, and conveyed her thanks to the young Count of Tierra-Nueva for his charming reception, she went back to her apartments, the children following in the same order in which they had entered.

Now when the little Dwarf heard that he was to dance a second time before the Infanta, and by her own express command, he was so proud that he ran out into the garden, kissing the white rose in an absurd ecstasy of pleasure, and making the most uncouth and clumsy gestures of delight.

The Flowers were quite indignant at his daring to intrude into their beautiful home, and when they saw him capering up and down the walks, and waving his arms above his head in such a ridiculous manner, they could not restrain their feelings any longer.

"He is really far too ugly to be allowed to play in any place where we are," cried the Tulips.

"He should drink poppy-juice, and go to sleep for a thousand years," said the great scarlet Lilies, and they grew quite hot and angry.

"He is a perfect horror!" screamed the Cactus. "Why, he is

twisted and stumpy, and his head is completely out of proportion with his legs. Really he makes me feel prickly all over, and if he comes near me I will sting him with my thorns."

"And he has actually got one of my best blooms," exclaimed the White Rose-Tree. "I gave it to the Infanta this morning myself, as a birthday present, and he has stolen it from her." And she called out: "Thief, thief, thief!" at the top of her voice.

Even the red Geraniums, who did not usually give themselves airs, and were known to have a great many poor relations themselves, curled up in disgust when they saw him, and when the Violets meekly remarked that though he was certainly extremely plain, still he could not help it, they retorted with a good deal of justice that that was his chief defect, and that there was no reason why one should admire a person because he was incurable; and, indeed, some of the Violets themselves felt that the ugliness of the little Dwarf was almost ostentatious, and that he would have shown much better taste if he had looked sad, or at least pensive, instead of jumping about merrily, and throwing himself into such grotesque and silly attitudes.

As for the old Sundial, who was an extremely remarkable individual, and had once told the time of day to no less a person than the Emperor Charles V. himself, he was so taken aback by the little Dwarf's appearance, that he almost forgot to mark two whole minutes with his long shadowy finger, and could not help saying to the great milk-white Peacock, who was sunning herself on the balustrade, that every one knew that the children of Kings were Kings, and that the children of charcoal-burners were charcoal-burners, and that it was absurd to pretend that it wasn't so; a statement with which the Peacock entirely agreed, and indeed screamed out, "Certainly, certainly," in such a loud, harsh voice, that the gold-fish who lived in the basin of the cool splashing fountain put their heads out of the water, and asked the huge stone Tritons what on earth was the matter.

But somehow the Birds liked him. They had seen him often in the forest, dancing about like an elf after the eddying leaves, or crouched up in the hollow of some old oak-tree, sharing his nuts with the squirrels. They did not mind his being ugly a bit. Why, even the nightingale herself, who sang so sweetly in the orange groves at night that sometimes the Moon leaned down to listen, was not much to look at after all; and, besides, he had been kind to them, and during that terribly bitter winter, when there were no berries on the trees, and

the ground was as hard as iron, and the wolves had come down to the very gates of the city to look for food, he had never once forgotten them, but had always given them crumbs out of his little hunch of black bread, and divided with them whatever poor breakfast he had.

So they flew round and round him, just touching his cheek with their wings as they passed, and chattered to each other, and the little Dwarf was so pleased that he could not help showing them the beautiful white rose, and telling them that the Infanta herself had given it to him because she loved him.

They did not understand a single word of what he was saying, but that made no matter, for they put their heads on one side, and looked wise, which is quite as good as understanding a thing, and very much easier.

The Lizards also took an immense fancy to him, and when he grew tired of running about and flung himself down on the grass to rest, they played and romped all over him, and tried to amuse him in the best way they could. "Every one cannot be as beautiful as a lizard," they cried; "that would be too much to expect. And, though it sounds absurd to say so, he is really not so ugly after all, provided, of course, that one shuts one's eyes, and does not look at him." The Lizards were extremely philosophical by nature, and often sat thinking for hours and hours together, when there was nothing else to do, or when the weather was too rainy for them to go out.

The Flowers, however, were excessively annoyed at their behaviour, and at the behaviour of the birds. "It only shows," they said, "what a vulgarising effect this incessant rushing and flying about has. Well-bred people always stay exactly in the same place, as we do. No one ever saw us hopping up and down the walks, or galloping madly through the grass after dragon-flies. When we do want change of air, we send for the gardener, and he carries us to another bed. This is dignified, and as it should be. But birds and lizards have no sense of repose, and indeed birds have not even a permanent address. They are mere vagrants like the gipsies, and should be treated in exactly the same manner." So they put their noses in the air, and looked very haughty, and were quite delighted when after some time they saw the little Dwarf scramble up from the grass, and make his way across the terrace to the palace.

"He should certainly be kept indoors for the rest of his natural life," they said. "Look at his hunched back, and his crooked legs," and they began to titter.

But the little Dwarf knew nothing of all this. He liked the birds and the lizards immensely, and thought that the flowers were the most marvellous things in the whole world, except of course the Infanta, but, then, she had given him the beautiful white rose, and she loved him, and that made a great difference. How he wished that he had gone back with her ! She would have put him on her right hand, and smiled at him, and he would have never left her side, but would have made her his playmate, and taught her all kinds of delightful tricks. For though he had never been in a palace before, he knew a great many wonderful things. He could make little cages out of rushes for the grasshoppers to sing in, and fashion the long jointed bamboo into the pipe that Pan loves to hear. He knew the cry of every bird, and could call the starlings from the tree-top, or the heron from the mere. He knew the trail of every animal, and could track the hare by its delicate footprints, and the boar by the trampled leaves. All the wild-dances he knew, the mad dance in red raiment with the autumn, the light dance in blue sandals over the corn, the dance with white snow-wreaths in winter, and the blossom-dance through the orchards in spring. He knew where the wood-pigeons built their nests, and once when a fowler had snared the parent birds, he had brought up the young ones himself, and had built a little dovecot for them in the cleft of a pollard elm. They were quite tame, and used to feed out of his hands every morning. She would like them, and the rabbits that scurried about in the long fern, and the jays with their steely feathers and black bills, and the hedgehogs that could curl themselves up into prickly balls, and the great wise tortoises that crawled slowly about, shaking their heads and nibbling at the young leaves. Yes, she must certainly come to the forest and play with him. He would give her his own little bed, and would watch outside the window till dawn, to see that the wild horned cattle did not harm her, nor the gaunt wolves creep too near the hut. And at dawn he would tap at the shutters and wake her, and they would go out and dance together all the day long. It was really not a bit lonely in the forest. Sometimes a Bishop rode through on his white mule, reading out of a painted book. Sometimes in their green velvet caps, and their jerkins of tanned deerskin, the falconers passed by, with hooded hawks on their wrists. At vintage-time came the grape-treaders, with purple hands and feet, wreathed with glossy ivy and carrying dripping skins of wine ; and the charcoal-burners sat round their huge braziers at night, watching the dry logs charring slowly

in the fire, and roasting chestnuts in the ashes, and the robbers came out of their caves and made merry with them. Once, too, he had seen a beautiful procession winding up the long dusty road to Toledo. The monks went in front singing sweetly, and carrying bright banners and crosses of gold, and then, in silver armour, with matchlocks and pikes, came the soldiers, and in their midst walked three barefooted men, in strange yellow dresses painted all over with wonderful figures, and carrying lighted candles in their hands. Certainly there was a great deal to look at in the forest, and when she was tired he would find a soft bank of moss for her, or carry her in his arms, for he was very strong, though he knew that he was not tall. He would make her a necklace of red bryony berries, that would be quite as pretty as the white berries that she wore on her dress, and when she was tired of them, she could throw them away, and he would find her others. He would bring her acorn-cups and dew-drenched anemones, and tiny glow-worms to be stars in the pale gold of her hair.

But where was she? He asked the white rose, and it made him no answer. The whole Palace seemed asleep, and even where the shutters had not been closed, heavy curtains had been drawn across the windows to keep out the glare. He wandered all round looking for some place through which he might gain an entrance, and at last he caught sight of a little private door that was lying open. He slipped through, and found himself in a splendid hall, far more splendid, he feared, than the forest, there was so much more gilding everywhere, and even the floor was made of great coloured stones, fitted together into a sort of geometrical pattern. But the little Infanta was not there, only some wonderful white statues that looked down on him from their jasper pedestals, with sad blank eyes and strangely smiling lips.

At the end of the hall hung a richly embroidered curtain of black velvet, powdered with suns and stars, the King's favourite devices, and brodered on the colour he loved best. Perhaps she was hiding behind that? He would try at any rate.

So he stole quietly across and drew it aside. No; there was only another room, though a prettier room, he thought, than the one he had just left. The walls were hung with a many-figured green arras of needle-wrought tapestry representing a hunt, the work of some Flemish artists who had spent more than seven years in its composition. It had once been the chamber of *Jean le Fou*, as he was called, that mad King who was so enamoured of the chase, that he had often tried in his

delirium to mount the huge rearing horses, and to drag down the stag on which the great hounds were leaping, sounding his hunting-horn, and stabbing with his dagger at the pale flying deer. It was now used as the council-room, and on the centre table were lying the red portfolios of the ministers, stamped with the gold tulips of Spain, and with the arms and emblems of the house of Hapsburg.

The little Dwarf looked in wonder all round him, and was half afraid to go on. The strange silent horsemen that galloped so swiftly through the long glades without making any noise, seemed to him like those terrible phantoms of whom he had heard the charcoal-burners speaking—the Comprachos, who hunt only at night, and if they meet a man, turn him into a hind, and chase him. But he thought of the pretty Infanta, and took courage. He wanted to find her alone, and to tell her that he too loved her. Perhaps she was in the room beyond.

He ran across the soft Moorish carpets, and opened the door. No ! She was not here either. The room was quite empty.

It was a throne-room, used for the reception of foreign ambassadors, when the King, which of late had not been often, consented to give them a personal audience ; the same room in which, many years before, envoys had appeared from England to make arrangements for the marriage of their Queen, then one of the Catholic sovereigns of Europe, with the Emperor's eldest son. The hangings were of gilt Cordovan leather, and a heavy gilt chandelier with branches for three hundred wax lights hung down from the black and white ceiling. Underneath a great canopy of gold cloth, on which the lions and towers of Castile were brodered in seed pearls, stood the throne itself, covered with a rich pall of black velvet studded with silver tulips and elaborately fringed with silver and pearls. On the second step of the throne was placed the kneeling-stool of the Infanta, with its cushion of cloth of silver tissue, and below that again, and beyond the limit of the canopy, stood the chair for the Papal Nuncio, who alone had the right to be seated in the King's presence on the occasion of any public ceremonial, and whose Cardinal's hat, with its tangled scarlet tassels, lay on a purple *tabouret* in front. On the wall, facing the throne, hung a life-sized portrait of Charles V. in hunting-dress, with a great mastiff by his side, and a picture of Philip II. receiving the homage of the Netherlands occupied the centre of the other wall. Between the windows stood a black ebony cabinet, inlaid with plates of ivory, on which the

figures from Holbein's Dance of Death had been graved—by the hand, some said, of that famous master himself.

But the little Dwarf cared nothing for all this magnificence. He would not have given his rose for all the pearls on the canopy, nor one white petal of his rose for the throne itself. What he wanted was to see the Infanta before she went down to the pavilion, and to ask her to come away with him when he had finished his dance. Here, in the Palace, the air was close and heavy, but in the forest the wind blew free, and the sunlight with wandering hands of gold moved the tremulous leaves aside. There were flowers, too, in the forest, not so splendid, perhaps, as the flowers in the garden, but more sweetly scented for all that ; hyacinths in early spring that flooded with waving purple the cool glens, and grassy knolls ; yellow primroses that nestled in little clumps round the gnarled roots of the oak-trees ; bright celandine, and blue speedwell, and irises lilac and gold. There were grey catkins on the hazels, and the foxgloves drooped with the weight of their dappled bee-haunted cells. The chestnut had its spires of white stars, and the hawthorn its pallid moons of beauty. Yes : surely she would come if he could only find her ! She would come with him to the fair forest, and all day long he would dance for her delight. A smile lit up his eyes at the thought, and he passed into the next room.

Of all the rooms this was the brightest and the most beautiful. The walls were covered with a pink-flowered Lucca damask, patterned with birds and dotted with dainty blossoms of silver ; the furniture was of massive silver, festooned with florid wreaths, and swinging Cupids ; in front of the two large fire-places stood great screens brodered with parrots and peacocks, and the floor, which was of sea-green onyx, seemed to stretch far away into the distance. Nor was he alone. Standing under the shadow of the doorway, at the extreme end of the room, he saw a little figure watching him. His heart trembled, a cry of joy broke from his lips, and he moved out into the sunlight. As he did so, the figure moved out also, and he saw it plainly.

The Infanta ! It was a monster, the most grotesque monster he had ever beheld. Not properly shaped, as all other people were, but hunchbacked, and crooked-limbed, with huge lolling head and mane of black hair. The little Dwarf frowned, and the monster frowned also. He laughed, and it laughed with him, and held its hands to its sides, just as he himself was doing. He made it a mocking bow, and it returned him a low reverence. He went towards it, and it came to

meet him, copying each step that he made, and stopping when he stopped himself. He shouted with amusement, and ran forward, and reached out his hand, and the hand of the monster touched his, and it was as cold as ice. He grew afraid, and moved his hand across, and the monster's hand followed it quickly. He tried to press on, but something smooth and hard stopped him. The face of the monster was now close to his own, and seemed full of terror. He brushed his hair off his eyes. It imitated him. He struck at it, and it returned blow for blow. He loathed it, and it made hideous faces at him. He drew back, and it retreated.

What is it? He thought for a moment, and looked round at the rest of the room. It was strange, but everything seemed to have its double in this invisible wall of clear water. Yes, picture for picture was repeated, and couch for couch. The sleeping Faun that lay in the alcove by the doorway had its twin brother that slumbered, and the silver Venus that stood in the sunlight held out her arms to a Venus as lovely as herself.

Was it Echo? He had called to her once in the valley, and she had answered him word for word. Could she mock the eye as she mocked the voice? Could she make a mimic world just like the real world? Could the shadows of things have colour and life and movement? Could it be that——? He started, and taking from his breast the beautiful white rose, he turned round and kissed it. The monster had a rose of its own, petal for petal the same! It kissed it with like kisses, and pressed it to its heart with horrible gestures.

When the truth dawned upon him, he gave a wild cry of despair, and fell sobbing to the ground. So it was he who was misshapen and hunchbacked, foul to look at and grotesque. He himself was the monster, and it was at him that all the children had been laughing, and the little Princess who he had thought loved him—she too had been merely mocking at his ugliness, and making merry over his twisted limbs. Why had they not left him in the forest, where there was no mirror to tell him how loathsome he was? Why had his father not killed him, rather than sell him to his shame? The hot tears poured down his cheeks, and he tore the white rose to pieces. The sprawling monster did the same, and scattered the faint petals in the air. It grovelled on the ground, and, when he looked at it, it watched him with a face drawn with pain. He crept away, lest he should see it, and covered his eyes with his hands. He crawled, like some wounded thing, into the shadow, and lay there moaning.

And at that moment the Infanta herself came in with her companions through the open window, and when they saw the ugly little Dwarf lying on the ground and beating the floor with his clenched hands, in the most fantastic and exaggerated manner, they went off into shouts of happy laughter, and stood all round him and watched him.

"His dancing was funny," said the Infanta; "but his acting is funnier still. Indeed he is almost as good as the puppets, only of course not quite so natural." And she fluttered her big fan, and applauded.

But the little Dwarf never looked up, and his sobs grew fainter and fainter, and suddenly he gave a curious gasp, and clutched his side. And then he fell back again, and lay quite still.

"That is capital," said the Infanta, after a pause; "but now you must dance for me."

"Yes," cried all the children, "you must get up and dance, for you are as clever as the Barbary apes, and much more ridiculous."

But the little Dwarf made no answer.

And the Infanta stamped her foot, and called out to her uncle, who was walking on the terrace with the Chamberlain, reading some despatches that had just arrived from Mexico, where the Holy Office had recently been established. "My funny little dwarf is sulking," she cried; "you must wake him up, and tell him to dance for me."

They smiled at each other, and sauntered in, and Don Pedro stooped down, and slapped the Dwarf on the cheek with his embroidered glove. "You must dance," he said, "*petit monstre*. You must dance. The Infanta of Spain and the Indies wishes to be amused."

But the little Dwarf never moved.

"A whipping master should be sent for," said Don Pedro wearily, and he went back to the terrace. But the Chamberlain looked grave, and he knelt beside the little Dwarf, and put his hand upon his heart. And after a few moments he shrugged his shoulders, and rose up, and having made a low bow to the Infanta, he said:

"*Mi bella Princesa*, your funny little dwarf will never dance again. It is a pity, for he is so ugly that he might have made the King smile."

"But why will he not dance again?" asked the Infanta, laughing.

"Because his heart is broken," answered the Chamberlain.

And the Infanta frowned, and her dainty rose-leaf lips curled in pretty disdain. "For the future let those who come to play with me have no hearts," she cried, and she ran out into the garden.

JANE BARLOW

B. 1860

MAUREEN'S FAIRING

“**W**ELL, good-night to you kindly, ma'am,” said Mrs. Halpin to Mrs. O'Dell, who had escorted her guest to the gap in the low furzy bank, which formed her entrance gate. As the two old women stood at it, they were looked down upon by almost the whole height of a dark mountain, whose purple summit was crested and jagged like the battlements of a thunder-cloud ; for the white and russet cabin had been set only a little way up the first climbing slope. Across the narrow valley they confronted a range of hills softer and greener, whose ridge still rose into the light of the summer sun-setting ; but the valley itself was full of long shadows, and its windings ended to right and left in a faint haze, paler and dimmer than the melting gyres of blue smoke.

“ I dunno what to say to it at all,” said Mrs. O'Dell, who having discussed the situation thoroughly with her gossip indoors was naturally inclined to reopen the subject at the last moment. “ Not a soul, so to spake, to be doin' a hand's turn about the place, except meself, that hasn't as much strength left in me as you'd put on the point of a knife. Sure it's to wrack and ruin we're goin' as aisy as a horse runnin' away down hill. And as for the rint—after gettin' no price for our fine heifer——”

“ 'Deed then, ma'am,” said Mrs. Halpin, “ I always said you were a cruel unlucky woman, wid your poor son and the wife took on you that way, and the grand-daughter not able for anythin', bein' dark, the crathur, the Lord may pity her. But there's that brother of hers now—sure Rody's a big grown lad, and if he was worth a thraneen at all, he might be keepin' things together for the two of you.”

“ Is it Rody ? Ah, now, I wouldn't say he was too bad-manin' a poor lad whatever,” said Rody's grandmother ; “ but sorra the ha'porth of use. Moonin' about the place he'll be from mornin' till night, and what he'll ha' got done at the end of it the dear knows, only it isn't a stroke of work. Bedad it's surprisin' the sinse he hasn't got, and he no stookawn, mind you, all the time. Ready enough he is at

the book-learnin'. Some talk he has of the school-master findin' him a place off away at Kilmacrum, but I wouldn't think he'll ever go for to be lavin' Maureen; and it's lost she'd be widout him. Rael good he is to her, I'll say that for him. He'd be hard set to make more of her if she could see from this to the land of Agypt and back agin."

"Sure, woman dear, it's quare world entirely," said Mrs. Halpin, resorting to general propositions for lack of any more particularly appropriate, "and the longer you live in it, the quarer it seems to be gettin'. You'd ha' thought you'd be apt to grow used to it, och wirra, it's the other way round. . . . But, musha, there's himself creepin' home," she continued, pointing to a figure on the road a little way below. "I must be steppin' along after him, for if he come to our place afore me, like enough he might have it in blazes over our heads, and he fiddlin' with the fire; he's that foostherin' and feeble these times, poor man."

"Somewhiles," said Mrs. O'Dell, "it seems to me the whole of us together's no betther than the black ould flies, when it's near winther on them, and they do be crawlin' about on their legs just for the name of keepin' alive. Och, but I'll be glad meself to creep into me bed now as soon as the childher come in. These fine evenin's they're mostly sittin' up above there at the ould Rath; and they've such contintment together, the crathurs, that I haven't the heart to be bawlin' them in, as long as there's a shadow of light in the air at all."

To the old Rath a short length of steep path led up through a screen of stunted oaks and beeches. It was a circular space of smooth green turf, marked out by curved banks of the same material, now worn down to a very unobtrusively artificial aspect. Here and there they were fortified by bushes of thorn and briar, but in one place they had crumbled into a wide gap, giving on the mountain slope, rougher ground with tussocks and clumps of coarse grass and furze and bracken. About this time Rody O'Dell and his twin sister, Maureen, who was blind, were sitting under a sloe bush nearly opposite to the gap. Rody looked as if he had on a burnished copper skullcap, his red hair was so short and sleek, and his grey eyes were light and bright; but Maureen was black-haired, and her eyes were much the colour of the wild violets which she had sometimes gathered, though never seen. She had now pulled a spike of foxglove blooms, and was poking her finger down their speckled throats with an air of enjoyment. Her touch was so fine that it only pilfered a little gold dust from each without hurt to

the frailest filament. Rody was whittling away at a snaggy piece of a stick.

"Themselves had a right to be in it soon," Maureen said presently; and Rody replied: "Sure they'll be comin' this now, no fear." However, the girl listened, and the boy looked for some minutes more, and nothing seemed to arrive. Then both of them exclaimed at once with suppressed eagerness: "Here they are." There was not apparently much cause for excitement. Ordinarily sharp ears might never have noticed the faint rustling among the drier fern-fronds; ordinarily keen eyes might have overlooked in the thickening light the whisked glimpses of white and brown, scuttling from clump to clump; and, in fact, it was after all merely the rabbits coming out to play in the dusk. Yet the event had plainly deep interest for the two O'Dells. Rody left off whittling his stick, and kept a close watch on the scampering rushes, while Maureen sat still with the expression of one who expects news. At last she said: "Is there plinty of them comin' to-night, Rody?" "Ay is there," he said; "sure the place is thick wid them along under the big bohalawns."

"Ah, now that's great," said Maureen, with a sigh of satisfaction, for she, of course, knew as well as possible that these golden-tufted rag-weeds are especially sacred to the little people, and may be orthodoxly associated with their proceedings. "And what 'ud you think they're goin' to be at to-night, Rody?" she asked again after a short silence.

"Just let me see," said Rody, staring hard in among the curved bracken-stalks and flat furze-boughs. "I'll tell you what—I declare to goodness, it looks like as if it was a fair they were having—ay, bedad, and it is so; a cattle fair, no less, wid every manner of little baste a-dhrivin' out to it. Och, but that bates all."

"Good-luck to them then," said Maureen, "that's grand entirely. Sure you never seen the likes of it before. And what sort of crathurs is the fairy bastes?"

"Sure just the one thing wid what cattle we have ourselves," said Rody, "only the quarest little bigness on them that ever you beheld. Be jabers now, there's a drove of bullocks after goin' by, and scarce a one of them the size of a *keerhogue* (clock). The whole of them 'ud trot aisy on the palm of me hand."

"Och, glory be to goodness to think of that. And is there any horses and sheep in it, and pigs?"

"Plinty, bedad. Is it pigs? Faix, here's little feller comin' along wid a couple, and he is as drunk as a fiddler, or I might say ould Dan Cosby that I seen dhroppin' in a hape off the car yisterday below Letterdrum."

"I never heard tell the good people 'ud be drinkin'," said Maureen, looking rather scandalised.

"Ah, well, sure maybe he's only lettin' on. But what 'ud you suppose they've got be way of cattle-pens? The peelin's of the apple you had aitin' here last night. They've set it up on an end in a ring like, and where it doesn't raich quite far enough, they've joined it wid dandelion stalks as iligant as you plase."

"'Deed, now, that's a fine invintion whatever. It's themselves do be rael cute."

"And here's a fairy man and a boy, and they ladin' a big sturk of a shaggy ould bull. Be the same token, they'll have their own work wid him, for a crosser lookin' ould divil I niver set eyes on. Bedad, if he was as big as he's little, he'd be apt to be doin' destruction on all before him; but sure you could lift him between your finger and thumb, same as if it was a dowluff; and suppose he tried hornin' you, 'twould be no more than a sort of prickle." To illustrate this, Rody broke off a sloe-thorn, and gently prodded the back of his sister's hand. "There, you might think that was him," he said, "and he lettin' a weeny roar—*moo-oo-ah*—like a hummin' bee goin' by in the air."

"And the hair on him 'ud be somethin' as soft and furry feelin'," said Maureen reflectively. "Them fairy bastes must be gay little crathurs. Rody, I wish to goodness 'twould stay summer wid us all the year round, the way we'd get the chance to be watchin' for them ivery evenin'. But go on tellin' me what all else they have."

"Musha, all manner of iverythin'. Here's a one of them jiggin' along on a terrible fine sorrel horse, a thrifle higher-standin' then a big grasshopper. Thunder and turf! More power to your honour's elbow—sure there was a troop of pigs and such thrapesin' in front of him that put him past his patience, so he up and lep clane over the back of a *bonyeen* (young pig), and it's after frightenin' a little ould woman till she's let a pair of chickens flutter out of her basket on her—troth you might think they were a couple of specklety moths flickerin' over the grass—and now the whole lot's high-skyin' after them as hard as they can pelt be way of catchin' them. . . . Och, and to see the rate a flock

of wee black-faced sheep's racin' round and round a stalk of hemlock, wid their bit of a colley doin' his endeavours to turn them ; but they're past his conthrol."

" It's quare that I don't hear e'er a bark out of him," said Maureen, " for when they're drivin' the sheep on the hills over beyond there, I hear them yap-yappin' the length of the day, and themselves as far off as you'd run in an hour or more."

" But sure there aren't many could bate you at hearin', Maureen," said Rody, " and you don't considher what a scrapeen of a crathur it is. A good-sized ladybird might as well be settin' up for a dog. He couldn't rise a noise 'ud raich that far, not if he barked wid ivery bone in his body."

" Sure not at all," Maureen said acquiescently, being wont to regard Rody's utterances as conclusively oracular. Still her face kept its listening expression, and in a minute she said : " There—I heard somethin' that time."

She was not mistaken. But when the approaching sounds strengthened into distinctness, they proved to be caused by very merely a mortal. Across the tussocky slope came a tall young man in a sailor's blue jersey, with a black woollen cap on his head, and in his hand a redly wrapped-up bundle. As he passed along, rabbits dived out of sight all around, but bobbed up again almost before the parted bracken-fronds had swung together.

" Why, it's Christy M'Kenna," said Rody. " I seen him yisterday down below. What the mischief's bringin' him here ? " Rody's tone implied dissatisfaction with the event, whatever the cause might have been, and Maureen looked half inclined to run away like the rabbits ; but she compromised the matter by drawing her little heather-green shawl further over her black hair, and shrinking into the shadow of the sloe-bush.

" Good evenin' to yous," said Christy, coming up to the bank. " Well, Rody, did you get anythin' of a dacint price for the little heifer ? 'Twas but a slack fair." There was nothing repellent or formidable in the good-humoured bronze of Christy's visage, and his voice struck Maureen as being rather reassuringly pleasant, though she feared that it would scare away the fairy folk.

" Och, she wint chape enough ; cattle was down to nothin' at all," Rody replied, with some grumpy indifference of tone. He had resumed his whittling, and just now slashed at a rough knot with so little

dexterity that the knife slipped out of his hand, and went flying into the tangle at his feet, an accident which added to his discomposure.

"Is it watchin' the rabbits you were?" said Christy. "There's a great gatherin' of them out on the hill-side to-night. You could have knocked them over handy wid a stick comin' through the furzes."

As Rody was groping on his hands and knees for his knife, he could not answer promptly, and before he had spoken, Maureen said, as if startled into speech: "Rabbits? I niver heard tell there were any in it. Sure it's the *fairies* there are in among the bushes, and that's what we're lookin' at."

Christy laughed a little. "Begorrah, thin, I think the rabbits has put them out of it this night, body and bones," he said, "for ne'er a sign of a *sheogue* did I notice at all at all."

"Rody sez the place is full of them," said Maureen. "Isn't it, Rody?"

Her appeal placed Rody in a painful dilemma. He did not wish to undeceive her, yet he was loth to profess a belief which might seem ridiculous to the much-travelled Christy, while again pride on his sister's behalf made him shrink from obviously humouring her in the presence of a stranger. Under other circumstances the difficulty might have been got over by his mother wit, but at the moment he was out of temper, which sorely blunts the edge of shrewdness; and he adopted, perhaps, the most ill-judged course he could have chosen when he said to Christy in what he supposed to be an aside: "Arrah now, man alive, can't you whisht gabbin' about rabbits?" For Maureen's quick ears caught the words, and they filled her with dismayed suspicion. She leaned forward, saying anxiously and eagerly: "But the good people come to the Rath here 'most ivery fine evenin'—sure, Rody, you haven't been only humbuggin' me all these times?"

But Rody remained guiltily silent, while Christy, perplexed at the girl's evident distress, answered as discreetly as he could in his ignorance of its cause: "Well, at all evints, them crathurs was all I seen about just now: but sure there might aisy ha' been an odd fairy or so through them, and I niver notice it. They'll do no harm anyway, here or there."

This philosophic view of the matter was not consolatory to Maureen. She rose to her feet, and stood for a moment with drooping head. "I wish," she said without looking up, "I wish I had the sight of me eyes, the way that people couldn't be makin' a fool of me." Then she

turned slowly away, and sat down again on the bank at a little distance. I think she had lost something more than her evening's entertainment, and faith in Rody—certain vague dreams based upon traditions of wonderful cures wrought by the good people when found in a kindly mood, a chance that might happen to anybody one of those days. The two young men eyed each other ruefully through the gathering dusk. Said Christy in an undertone: "What ails her at all?"

"Botheration to it," said Rody, "sure you see, she not havin' her sight, we do be at a loss now and agin for a bit of divarsion; so I used to get tellin' her quare ould invintions, whin the rabbits come out here of an evenin', lettin' on to her 'twas the fairies were in it, and this way and that way. And, bedad, now themselves is the comical little divils, wid their thricks and their capers, and that's no lie," he added, as if in self-defence. Strange as the freak of conscience may appear, it is a fact that on nights when no rabbits were to be seen, he had never reported any fairy doings. "She'd take a won'erful pleasure in hearin' about anythin' off the common like; but she won't now that she knows 'twas only romancin'. And I doubt she's a thrifle vexed, the crathur," Rody said, glancing compunctiously towards his sister.

"Ah, now, that's a rael bad job," said Christy, with unfeigned concern. "Faith, if I'd known, I'd ha' liefer lost a month's pay than to be spoilin' her stories on her. But, sure, if it's a fancy she has for hearin' curious things, I meself could be tellin' her plenty that 'ud surprise her finely, and as thrue, more be token, as the sky over our heads. Why, what 'ud you say to an affair I seen, maybe a little better than a couple of months ago," Christy went on, raising his voice, not unintentionally, "and we sailin' home from the United States? A big hill, the full size of one of them forninst us, swimmin' along on the say, and ivery bit of it nothin' but clane ice, as clear and as green as the deep wather; the same as if you could be buildin' up a great hape o' rowlin' waves, and the top of it all white, powdered wid snow, like as if it was settlin' to foam over the edges. That's quare now? And a grand watherfall leppin' right down from the heighth of it, wid the sun turnin' it all the colours in the rainbow, till the sparklin' of it 'ud 'most——"

An indignant murmur from Rody cut him short: "Musha, man, where'd be the sinse of blatherin' about rainbows sparklin', to her that's had niver a chance to see a shine out of the sun in all her life's days? Sure, when I'm tellin' her aught, I keep describin' the things

accordin' to the littleness and bigness of them, and the feelin' and shapes they have ; and so she gets some sort of notion what I'm talkin' about. But you may let the sun alone."

Upon this a crestfallen silence succeeded Christy's traveller's tale. Presently, however, his face brightened with a sudden thought, and he began to unknot a corner of his bundle. " Whethen now, only I was stookawn enough to nearly disremimber it," he said. " I've somethin' here she might belike take a fancy to." He extricated a beautiful tropical shell, whose lily-white whorls were lined with a flush of wild-rose pink. " Wouldn't you think she might be pleased handlin' that ? " he said. " And the say hummin' it has in it she could hear as well, in course, as another."

" She might, may be," Rody said doubtfully ; and Christy considered himself encouraged to try the experiment. Going over to Maureen, he touched her hand softly with the shell, saying in his most persuasive manner : " Just thry the feel of that in your hand, mavourneen. I'm afther showin' it to your brother there, and he's in great admiration of it."

Maureen took the shell, and ran her fingers swiftly along the delicate outlines, fine in texture as a blossom, and firm as marble. A happier look stole into her face. " What at all is it ? " she said.

" Sure it's just a sort of shell. I picked it up meself one day off the strand near the town of Kingston in Jamaicy. Lyin' it was in the sand, that's as soft there as fine male, and as hot as if it was gettin' a bake in the oven. But hold it to your ear a minute—so, that a-way—and you'll hear somethin' 'ill surprise you."

" Saints above ! " said Maureen, listening, not without awe. " It's like the win' blustherin' by when you're under the tree branches, wid a sound of the chapel-bell through it, as if 'twas near blown away, and somethin' else besides—I dunno what."

" That's the taste of the say-waves roarin' ; it's kep' inside it. Och, now, you wouldn't be askin' me to take it back ? Keep it yourself, jewel, and then you can be hearin' it hummin' whenever you like. I've plinty more the same, only diff'rint pattrons. Some of them's as round and as shiny as a chiny bowl, and some's the shape of grand big saucers. And I've a string of bades, the iligantest blue colour—och, no matter about that—but they're that smooth you could scarce hold them from slippin' out of your hand. And I've the quarest sort of a big ball, that looks to be wound round and round and round wid threads of silk as

thin as cobwebs ; and what's inside of it I can't say, but if you shake it, you'll hear it rattlin' like a *glugger* (bad egg). It's somethin' rael uncommon, I'm thinkin'. So, if you'd e'er a fancy to see them, I'd step over and bring them to-morra, wid all the pleasure in life. I lost me ship be raison of me father bein' took bad last week, and I'm stoppin' a while wid me sister down at Letterdrum. May be them things 'ud divert you a bit."

"Ay would they," Maureen said softly.

At this moment a shrill and querulous call came quavering up the hill : " Childher, musha, good gracious, childher, is it sittin' out there you'd be till the sun's risin', and keepin' me waitin' up for you, wid the head noddin' off of me shoulders ? "

" There's granny lettin' a screech to us," said Rody, standing up from his search for his knife, and glad to end what seemed to him an unlucky evening. " We had a right to be goin' in."

" Well, I'll step over here to-morra wid the whole of them," Christy said to Maureen, " about this time, or perhaps in the mornin' if I can ; but I'll bring them, at any rate."

" They'll be grand," said Maureen. " And—and I'd like to hear tell, mind you, about the big ice hill, wid the watherfall on it, and all. Sure I know well enough about the sun shinin'. It's only the way Rody will be talkin'," she said, with rather ungrateful disparagement. Indeed, from henceforth, I believe, Rody, regarded as her oracle, may be said to have fallen dumb.

One fine rose-latticed evening, a few weeks later, old Mrs. O'Dell had another gossip with her neighbour, Mrs. Halpin, standing at her door. " Ay, indeed, it's a great thing for us entirely," said she in reply to a congratulatory remark. " The M'Kennas is a rael dacint family, and Christy has a bit of money saved that he's willing to put in the farm. And Rody's got a fine place down below at Athbeg, that he's goin' to after the weddin'. Och, now, who'd ha' iver thought of such a thing happenin' Maureen, the crathur ? Sure I sez to Christy himself, when he was talkin' to me about it : ' Goodness help you, lad,' sez I, ' and what at all will you be doin' wid only a dark wife to keep house for you ? ' And sez he to me : ' Bedad, ma'am, I'll tell you that aisy, if you'll tell me what I'm to do widout her ; for me soul to the saints, if I know, be any manner of manes.' That's what he said. Christy's always plisant. There, that's the three of them comin' along the lane. Ay, sure it's great good luck altogether."

KATHERINE TYNAN

(Mrs. HINKSON)

B. 1861

AT THE SPOTTED LAMB

MRS. LUMLEY at The Spotted Lamb had a gentleman in her best rooms, the like of whom did not often come to Rosegarland. He had arrived by the coach from London on a Tuesday, and had now for three weeks been Mrs. Lumley's lodger.

He dressed modestly in garments of Quaker grey or snuff-brown, but the suits were cut with distinction. His hair had been powdered the day he came and tied in a queue with ribbons : but powder will not last for ever, and there were no perruquiers in Rosegarland village, so the gentleman's brown hair, dusty from the powder or perhaps from the passage of time, had come in view.

He wore flowered waistcoats, magnificent although sober, and his linen was of the finest. His coat and breeches, although of woollen stuff, were of a fineness that exceeded silk. It was a pity, said Mrs. Lumley, who was a kind soul, to see how the garments had been stuffed headlong into his travelling-bag. Under her kind hands they had somewhat recovered from their evil treatment, being laid away with lavender bags between the folds in the bow-shaped chest of drawers and the mahogany wardrobe, great enough to have held all Bluebeard's wives.

Rosegarland village lies pleasantly upon a hill. The strange gentleman's bedroom—he called himself Mr. Jones—stood endways to the valley. The window of one of its closets looked over the valley, and at night the songs of the nightingales came in by it. Across the fireplace, which was laid with tiles representing the parable of the Prodigal Son, was another closet, a powdering-closet, which did not admit a chink of light, and was hung with clothes-pegs and shelved to the roof.

The powdering-closet interested Mr. Jones. Mrs. Lumley was very ready to talk about it. Many a lady had had her head dressed there in Squire Alvanley's time, when there were hunt-balls and the like at The Spotted Lamb. That was thirty years ago, and the Place had been shut up these many years. It was another world without the Alvanleys.

Mr. Jones seemed to like to listen to Mrs. Lumley's simple rustic talk, her tales of the great days that were over. She was often afraid that her lodger might be bored and might depart as suddenly as he had come. Every Friday the coach passed through Rosegarland on its way to town ; and she breathed more freely when the horn was blown and the four greys clattered on their way, since the danger was over for another week.

It was May, and the valley was full of newly-opened leaves, white-thorn in blossom, and the songs of thrush and blackbird, to say nothing of the nightingales at night. At night, too, if you climbed the hilly road to Rosegarland, the glow-worms were all alight amid the starwort and speedwells of the grassy banks. Every little wood and coppice was sky-blue with the dancing hyacinths. The woods, which you might walk a hundred times and every time take a new road, were heavenly in their first freshness of green, and full of the whisperings and mysteries of young love.

"And how long might your honour be pleased to stay?" Mrs. Lumley asked timidly after one of their conversations. She had taken a fancy to her lodger. What if his face was lined, his cheeks too purple and a little flaccid, his eyes dusty and tired, he had a way with the women that made them devoted to him. In spite of his premature ageing he was still a fine, handsome man, with an elegant figure and an air of distinction. And he had beautiful manners ; Rosegarland had never dreamt of such manners.

"Stay!" he repeated, with a frown that had no displeasure in it. "Why, stay for ever, my good soul."

"For ever, sir!" Mrs. Lumley could not believe in her own good fortune. "Your honour means to stay with us for ever?"

"Could I do better?"

He waved his hand towards the window of the sitting-room which was open on an orchard all rosy with blossom. A troop of little black pigs grunted and squealed in the grass, which lay under a shower of the blossom. Stocks and gillyflowers in great scented clumps grew under the window, and the air was spicy with their smell.

"Could I do better? St. James's has nothing to show like this."

It was the first suggestion he had made that he was a man of fashion, though Mrs. Lumley, with her memories of the Alvanleys and their fine friends, had never doubted it.

" Ah but, sir," she said, " the winter will come and 'twill not be so pretty. Your honour will go back to town then."

" Not I. I am sick of the town. I want the simplicities of life. There will be beauties in winter—a sky of rose and lilac over there beyond the Alvanleys' chimney-stacks and a flight of crows upon it. And the brooks cutting channels in the roads when the wet weather comes, and shouting and singing as they run. And all the world charmed to stillness in a frost. And the old church over there huddled under its mantle of snow. There is nothing like the tossing of trees in a gale to rock a child, or a man for the matter of that, asleep."

Mrs. Lumley looked at him wonderingly.

" I'd have taken your honour for a countryman to hear you speak."

He laughed and flushed a little.

" 'Tis the townsman loves the country best," he said. " Your countryman only knows that the mire is on his boots, however fine the sky."

That night he walked into the inn kitchen and sat down on the settle by the fire, within the shelter of the great screen of oak, so delicately poised that a child's little finger might move it.

The Spotted Lamb was a pleasant place, full of bowery rooms and little intricate passages. But no room in it was as pleasant as the kitchen, that great apartment lined with oak, which contained many cupboards, its table and benches of oak blackened and polished with age, its deep windows full of flowering plants, and its magnificent hearth with the seats either side the logs. A maze of little cupboards was in the walls of it, and about it many hooks to receive riding-whips and spurs and bridles, and such matters.

Mr. Jones made friends with the merry party, and paid for many drinks. Mrs. Lumley could make you a tankard of spiced ale with an apple bobbing in it with any woman, and the spiced ale went round many times. He joined in the chorus of " The Jolly Farmer's Boy " as though he had been a countryman born, and never went wrong in the words or the tune, and he gave Tom Spendlove who sang it a gold guinea.

He was voted the best of good company, and shook hands with every man as they departed in good time.

But there was one, a sullen fellow, Dick Stone of Redstreak Farm, whose face did much to spoil the gaiety ; and although he drank of

the spiced ale Mr. Jones paid for, he did it as though he was drinking poison.

Mr. Jones commented on it next day to Mrs. Lumley.

"He has been ever so," the good woman said, "since his wife Margery died. She was Margery Dinsdale, a sweet, pretty creature. But her heart wasn't in the marriage; 'twas given to another; and they say Dick Stone knew as how he'd been cheated of her love. I remember Dick Stone merry. But Margery died when Dolly was born and he's been a glum man ever since."

"How was it that she didn't love him?" asked Mr. Jones, who was ever interested in the country tales and could not have enough of them.

"Well, sir, 'twas that good-for-naught Jack Trelawney that won the maid's heart. You'll have heard of him perhaps in the town. They say he's greatly talked of and that the Prince can't live without him and is the finest of gentlemen—that was poor Susan Trelawney's child. Poor Susan, she was a harmless woman, and knew a deal about herbs and such-like; and was downright set on the child, as though she had to make up to him for giving him no father. A handsome, proud boy, and none of us wondered when Squire Alvanley, after he had buried Master Hugh, took Susan's child to rear him as a gentleman."

"If he had had his rights," said Mr. Jones gloomily, "he could have lived at the Place as the Alvanleys did, an honest country-gentleman's life. 'Twas a late atonement of the squire's."

"Your honour has heard the story?"

"A man can't be long at Rosegarland without hearing of the Alvanleys and the last of them, who is bottle-holder to the Prince, and has no name, although the town cuts its coat by his and fears his frown more than God Almighty's. A poor thing to have come to—the arbiter of fashion, the oracle of assembly-rooms, the autocratic ruler of petticoats and periwigs. A thing that carries a clouded cane and smells of essences, whose campaigns are on carpets, who knows more of wax lights than of stars. A poor, pinchbeck image of a man. The Alvanleys were soldiers and sailors and statesmen."

"They say he is brave and good-hearted," Mrs. Lumley said, wondering at Mr. Jones's heat. "And the Prince loves him."

"He has a few foolish feats to his name. He rode his horse, poor beast, up the steps of his father's town-house, and leaped him from a window over a coachful of ladies. He walked to Jerusalem for a wager

and played ball against the walls. Fine doings surely. As for the Prince, why, if it comes to that, Jack is no worse than his master, but rather better. His love is a poor thing, that no man, or woman either, is much the better of."

"Why, that is true," said Mrs. Lumley, thinking on the Princess, who, if she was light, had been ill-treated.

"The grass grows up to the windows of the Place," Mr. Jones went on with the same gloomy air. "The peacocks are dead that used to scream on its terraces; the basin where the goldfish swam is broken and the water dried up. The gardens are a wilderness; the rooms moulder to decay. A goddess lies on her face by the steps of the hall door."

"You have seen the Place?"

"I went there yesterday; the old chimneys between the fresh green of the trees made me curious. And so this ill-fated brat of the Alvanleys broke a sweet countrymaid's heart?"

"He forgot that ever he'd broken a sixpence with her when Squire Alvanley, being childless, remembered Susan Trelawney's son. 'Twas no worse than that, your honour!"

"And Margery's child lived?"

"As good and bonny a maid as any in the country. Many lads go courting at Redstreak Farm for all that Dick Stone's not such good company."

A few days later Mr. Jones came back from one of his long solitary walks, and entered the kitchen of The Spotted Lamb with so blithe a step that Mrs. Lumley, who was making cowslip wine, looked up at him in wonder.

"Your honour has liked the walk?" she said.

"It is a land of apples and roses," he answered; "and I have drunk milk from the hands of Hebe herself. I should be a sour fellow to complain."

"Your honour looks well on it. Ten years have rolled off your age since the day the Flying Mercury left your honour at my door."

"Why, I have been bathing my face in May dew. How old would you take me to be, Mrs. Lumley? Fifty? Forty-five? Forty?—I am no more than forty, and I feel young enough for bridegroom to a girl of eighteen. Your air does wonders. The Wells would be deserted if the fine folks only knew."

After that he would break into snatches of song as he moved about the house that brought a smile to Mrs. Lumley's lips, for she had grown fond of her lodger.

Dolly's neck is white as curds,
With a golden freckle or two ;
Dolly's voice is like the birds
In the pastures, in the dew ;
Dolly laughs with Prue and Phyllis,
And her laugh's a shower of lilies.

" Lord, what a pretty song, sir," she said once, " and your honour's self has a voice like a bird's. You sing as if your heart was in it."

" The song was made," said Mr. Jones, " on a milkmaid that was the sweetest thing the songmaker had ever seen. She was taking butter from a churn, and her arms were stripped high above her elbows, and they were white as the milk. She had a head of black curls with a thought of a pansy in their jet ; her eyes, too, were black, but her face was milk and roses ; she had two dimples—what would not a woman of fashion have given for them ?—and a round white chin ; and she wore a pink wrapper ; and because the day was hot she had left her neck bare—the sweetest neck. She made the man think on his old love, but she was his old love's daughter ; and he loved her, as he had loved her mother, at first sight.

Pink is Dolly's only wear ;
Dolly's eyes are black as sloes :
Dolly's always fresh and fair
From her top-knot to her toes."

He broke again into the cheerful singing.

" The song might have been made on Dolly Stone of Redstreak Farm," said Mrs. Lumley. " But, lord, 'tis fitter for a lad to make than a man who had wooed the girl's mother. 'Twould be foolishness in a man of his age."

" Lads don't know how to love," said Mr. Jones, frowning. " They are in love with their own image, like the golden Hyacinthus. It takes an older man to love."

He went away then and sang no more for the day. But the next day he was singing again ; and presently, coming in on Mrs. Lumley as she was making a candy of May-blossom, he nearly made the good woman drop her pan with its fragrant contents, so surprised was she at the fineness of his appearance.

He was dressed in pearl-grey silk, with lace ruffles and jewelled buttons ; he had silk stockings and shoes with red heels to them ; and his three-cornered hat was worn rakishly. Nor did his clothes look too gay for his years, for some magic of the sweet country had wrought a subtle alteration in the man.

The crow's-feet had passed away from his eyes and they were bright, as though he had washed them in euphrasy. His cheeks, which had had the stain of wine in them, had grown clear since he had lived plainly. His face and figure and gait had become tonic, braced-up, as though he had found a fountain of youth in these wilds and had drunk deep of it.

" Well ! "

He smiled at the good woman's open-mouthed admiration.

" You are like a bridegroom, sir."

" Well, who knows but that I may be one before the summer is out ? "

He went off twirling his cane and singing ; and the same song was on his lips perpetually in the weeks that followed, while the sweet spring turned round to summer.

Dolly dabbles fingers brown
In the whitest milk that flows ;
Dolly wears a rosy gown,
Smells of roses as she goes.

It was always Dolly : always and for ever Dolly.

It was not long before the gossip of the village came to Mrs. Lumley, and she knew that the Dolly of the song was the Dolly of Redstreak Farm. It seemed that Mr. Jones had made friends with glum Dick Stone, who was well pleased that his daughter should marry a gentleman. And about the girl herself no one seemed to know. Young Oliver Buckenham of Meadowsweet Farm had been courting her before Mr. Jones came ; but now they had quarrelled, and no one thought it strange that she should have thrown over Oliver for her splendid new lover, although he was middle-aged.

And for the matter of that he grew younger every day, although he could not hope to have the smooth cheek and thick yellow hair of a lad like Oliver. Yet Oliver grew old while his fortunate rival grew young, and sang no more to his team of horses nor as he mowed the hay ; and people hardly knew him for the same merry fellow who had been as blithe as the lark.

One day when Mr. Jones was absent, as he usually was the greater part of the day, two gentlemen rode up to The Spotted Lamb and asked if such a one, describing him, had lodgings in the village.

"It will be Mr. Jones," said Mrs. Lumley. "If your honours would be pleased to wait. He generally returns about this hour."

The gentlemen gave their horses to be fed and watered, and while they waited for Mr. Jones they ordered and consumed a meal of Mrs. Lumley's cold roast beef and fresh garden salad, with home-brewed ale; and were so free with their money and so finely dressed and had such a way with the serving-maids of the house that the good woman set them down in her mind as highwaymen. Of course that would explain the mystery about Mr. Jones and why a retired place like Rosegarland was best suited to him. But she was grieved to think that it was so; for however gallant highwaymen might be and adored by the girls, they were meat for the gallows if they were caught.

When Mr. Jones came in suddenly upon them, his eyes flashed, and the old gloom fell upon his face, and when they cried out, laughing, that at last they had run him to earth he fell to swearing at them, so that Mrs. Lumley shut the door hastily, for Mr. Jones had been so gentle in speech that she had sometimes doubted that he was a man of fashion; and his new violence troubled her.

For more than two hours there was the sound of much argument from the parlour, and Mrs. Lumley learned, because there was a cupboard in her store-closet adjoining where the wall was thin, that they were trying to prevail upon Mr. Jones to go with them, urging upon him that some one, whose name she could not catch, was inconsolable without him. But to that Mr. Jones answered bitterly that that person had no loyalty to any one except in so far as he or she ministered to his pleasures. Moreover, that he was tired of that person's insolence, being a better man than he; that he had loved him once but loved him no longer; and finally that he would never return. And the same he asserted with a round oath and a blow of his clenched fist on the table that made Mrs. Lumley jump at the other side of the partition.

The two gentlemen rode away at sundown, calling back to Mr. Jones, who stood bareheaded in the road to see them go, that he would soon tire of his stay in Arcady and come back to town. He was gloomy for that evening, but the next day he was as merry as ever, and for many days following.

His clothes had come down from town, many chests of them, by

the coach ; and he hardly ever seemed to wear the same suit two days running. His attire was the delight and admiration of the village, and Mrs. Lumley never saw him but with uplifted eyes and hands of admiration.

One day as he passed out he paused and asked her if she remembered what she had said about the song of Dolly and him that made it, and how it was fitter for a lad than a mature man.

"Do you think still," he asked, "that she would prefer a rustic lad in homespuns, with hay in his hair and smelling of his occupation, before a town gallant."

"Why, it would depend, sir, on whether she had a true heart," said Mrs. Lumley simply.

"Might not her heart be true to the gallant as well?" he asked, and then went out without waiting for an answer.

Being a lover, he was a creature of whims and moods ; and the evening following he came in with a dejected air, and put his hand on Mrs. Lumley's shoulder.

"You were right," said he, "when you said that the clock of Time could never be turned backward. If I could make a bargain to sell my soul to get my youth back, I would do it."

"Don't say such things, sir," pleaded Mrs. Lumley, almost tearfully. "As for talking about the clock of Time, that I never did ; I leave such things to my betters."

It was now the time when the wild roses hung all the hedgerows, and the faint sweet scent of them was like wine in the air. The honeysuckle, too, was out, golden as honey and as sweet ; and the rank sweetness of the elder-blossom was everywhere. The hay lay new in the meadows and the corncrake was silent at last in the moonlit nights. The time of the nightingale was over ; and soon the year would be sober and would carry the air of a matron, although she was now in the flush of youth.

And Mr. Jones had the air of a triumphing lover. He and Dolly were to be made man and wife in July ; and every one seemed to have forgotten Oliver Buckenham except Mrs. Lumley, who had a compassionate heart, and had come on the lad, face downwards in the honeyed swathes of the hay, one day as she took the short-cut by Wood-End to the village of Farley.

"Shall we have a hauling home of the bride to The Spotted Lamb, your honour?" she asked of Mr. Jones.

He went with his head so much in the air those days that it might well be he had thought of nothing so practical as the roof that was to cover himself and his bride. But he had thought of it, and a fine sensation there was when it was known that Alvanley Place had come into his hands, and was to be made ready for Dick Stone's daughter. Many people, though they had liked pretty Dolly, thought it little short of a scandal that she was to sit in old Madam Alvanley's seat.

There were others who said that Dick Stone had got more joy of the marriage than his daughter, and that pretty Dolly's roses were withering. But if it was so her infatuated lover saw nothing of it.

Dolly's mouth is filled with pearls,
Damask roses on her cheek ;
'Mid her dimples and her curls
Love himself plays hide-and-seek.

The song of Dolly was for ever on his lips ; but Mrs. Lumley smiled no longer. She had never known good to come of such unequal marriages, and the memory of Oliver Buckenham's attitude, as though he lay on the rack, troubled her.

One morning in the dews and scents of the hour before dawn she heard a horse clatter furiously through the village.

"It will be Mrs. Stiles at the Leas," she said to herself, "and John Stiles is riding for the midwife. I pray the poor soul may not be mortal bad ; he rode at such a rate."

But it was not Mrs. Stiles, for John Stiles was in for his beer next morning and reported his wife still up and doing.

Mr. Jones went off as usual about half an hour before noon, "walking on air" said the gossips, who leant through the door of The Spotted Lamb to look after him.

About twelve o'clock there was another sensation, for a magnificent coach with postilions and footmen drove up to The Spotted Lamb ; and the postilions and footmen and coachman all had powdered heads, and were dressed in liveries of gold and scarlet, fine enough for a duke or the Lord Mayor of London.

One gentleman rode in the coach. He wore no powder, but his head of curls fell about his handsome fleshy face ; and his clothes were even finer than Mr. Jones had made them used to at The Spotted Lamb.

Mrs. Lumley went out all curtsies to the side of the coach. The gentleman asked for Mr. Jones and was told he was out ; he then asked if he might have a private sitting-room to await his return.

The Spotted Lamb, and indeed the village for the matter of that, was all in a flutter. The servants who came with the coach soon told the name of their master. Mrs. Lumley was quite overcome, and vowed that nothing would induce her to enter the parlour where he waited, because she would surely faint on approaching him.

So she had hartshorn to her nose, and in the safe hiding-place of her store-closet lay back in a chair, listening to the impatient pacing to and fro of those august feet.

At last word was brought to her that Mr. Jones was returning.

She hastened out as fast as her trembling feet would carry her to warn him of who awaited him. But he passed her by without a word. What had come to him? The good woman could have screamed outright at his face that put even her news out of her head.

It was fallen in a mass of haggard lines and shadows. If ever despair sat on a face it sat there. Although he would not wait for her to speak he walked slowly and heavily. His white silk coat was stained as though he had lain with it in the grass before the dews were dried. The lace at his wrists was torn, and dangled in a few shreds. Blood trickled down his chin where he had bitten his lip through.

"Lord love your honour, what has happened to you?" she cried, mother-tenderness awake in her heart.

He went on as though he had not heard her and passed within the parlour whence so often she had heard the song of Dolly.

The door closed slowly. She heard the shout inside:

"Why, Jack, I have come for you!"

Then the door closed.

She flew to the store-closet and laid her ear to the wall, where a day or two before she had discovered a tiny hole from which a knot of wood had fallen out.

"I spoke in anger, but now I withdraw it. Dear Jack, the wine is sour without you. There is no one to set the table in a room. Almack's is deserted. The pretty women are inconsolable. Come back with me to the town. You look as though you were tired of your country whim."

"I will go where you like." Mr. Jones's voice had the strangest sound of suffering. "Only let me make a hasty toilet; I am not fit to be seen with your Highness."

"You won't escape me again?—then I shall let you go. Upon my honour, Jack, I was deucedly sorry I said it. I can't make excuses

even to you, though I love you, man. It shall not occur again, I promise you on the word of a prince."

"I had forgotten it, I assure your Highness."

The voice of utmost dejection brought the tears to Mrs. Lumley's kind eyes.

An hour later the splendid coach was again at the door of The Spotted Lamb. Mr. Jones had clad himself in the sober fineness of his early days. The blood was washed from his lip. He looked no worse now than care-worn and old.

Mrs. Lumley was in tears. Mr. Jones was coming back no more. A man would be sent to fetch away his belongings. He had left more gold on the table than would pay for a year's lodging, and Mrs. Lumley did not care to take it up.

Just at the last he paused in the narrow inn passage where the Great Person preceded him, and turned aside into the little brown parlour. There had been stocks and gillyflowers when he came: there were now Mary-lilies and the last of the roses. A sheaf of lilies in the brown room was sharp as the flash of an angel's sword.

"After all," he said, "you were wise, you kind soul. She chose the lad and rode with him at daybreak. Good-bye!"

He kissed her cheek and was gone. Coach and horses, coachman, footmen, postilions were gone, like a fairy-tale, into a cloud of dust. The crowd of villagers, who had stood about in an awe-struck gaping, might well believe that those tremendous events had happened to Rosegarland only in a dream.

THE MEETING IN THE LIBRARY

KATHERINE TYNAN

THE Library was little frequented except by the curious. It was rather inaccessible for those who would consult its learning, out-of-the-way, with slums grown up about it. For the mere idler it had no interest at all: the newest book its shelves held was two hundred years old.

The Librarian had something of a sinecure. This hot summer afternoon the garden invited him. The Library overlooked the Deanery garden, and the Librarian used to walk there sometimes in his slackest hours with the Dean's daughter. It might be said that his hours were always slack. They were short too, for the Library closed at dusk. No provision for reading by artificial light had ever been made there.

This day of June the Librarian came in hastily. The walk had taken more time than he knew and he was to dine at the Deanery at eight o'clock. He had to go home and dress first. The golden pollen of the lilies between which he had been walking with the Dean's daughter was on his coat. He dismissed the porter, went into the Library, locked up his desk, whistling in a glad, quick way, something after the manner of the blackbird in the cedar outside, took the great bunch of keys, locked the Library door behind him, and went home.

He had not noticed in one of the recesses a young man asleep with his head upon his arms, his arms upon a table in the window overlooking the garden.

The green twilight came after the rose and violet. The evening star shone out in the green and the young moon came after. Lights sprang up in the Deanery house across the garden. The birds went to sleep and the scent of the lilies grew stronger in the dew; for the country was close at hand and the dews yet drenched the Deanery garden as though it were a meadow.

The scent of lilies was strong as a narcotic. Humphrey Brandon's head fell sideways in his sleep, revealing his face. It was a fair, handsome face and a good one, although the mouth, sweet as it was, lacked firmness. The forehead, white above its line of sunburn, wore a frown.

A name broke from his lips, "Amaryllis"; another name, "Margaret." The frown grew deeper, a look of pain scored the young handsome face in its sleep.

Master Humphrey Brandon had been sleeping ill of late, or his slumbers had not now been so profound in spite of his hard pillow and the evident uneasiness of his thoughts.

He had come into the Library on his way back from a garden-party where he had had an exquisite hour with Amaryllis. Only six weeks before her disturbing presence had troubled his life—a gay, enchanting, bewildering presence. He and Amaryllis had strayed away from the rest of the company by a pond, had fed the ducks, and afterwards rowed in a crazy boat among the water-lilies. How Amaryllis had laughed! She had taken off her hat—an airy pink thing wreathed with roses—and had pinned a white and golden water-lily here and there among the roses. Her golden-brown curls clustering about her small head were as alluring as a baby's. Her violet eyes under dark lashes; her pert little white nose and firm white chin; the red lips innocently smiling over little perfect teeth; the milk-white throat above the falling lace collar: all these beauties had so bewitched him that he had forgotten Margaret.

Once away from Amaryllis he had remembered. And it was not the first time he had forgotten; not the first time by many that he had remembered.

Margaret was the fair saint of his boyish dreams. She was six years his senior, and she had meant to him all of calm and rest and soothing the world possessed. She had been something of a religion to him.

They were not declared lovers, but Humphrey Brandon had always been sure that one day he would ask his saint to become mere woman for him and that she would stoop into his arms. Then had come—Amaryllis. He knew that if he should go to Margaret and tell her about Amaryllis she would bless him as she had always blessed him, and would bid him bring the girl to her that she might love her as well.

But though he had no fear on that score, yet he was not sure that he wanted to go to Margaret with his tale. Just now he was bewitched, bedevilled, when Amaryllis came in view. The hem of her muslin skirt, the point of her little high-heeled shoe, were things to fall down before. He had hardly ever looked lower than Margaret's eyes, those true eyes, with immortal lights steady in them.

He wanted Amaryllis, and yet he was quite sure that his eternal need would be for Margaret.

Perhaps if he gave his passion for Amaryllis the rein it would fall as dead as scattered rose-petals in a little while and his heart would return to Margaret, if indeed it had ever strayed from her.

Such thoughts and trouble at his own frailty had kept him awake of nights. He was not of the stuff of which sinners are made. He could not palter with his conscience light-heartedly.

If he waited—the hurt to Amaryllis would be nothing. He had heard her laugh with a new lover before he was out of hearing. It was perhaps her gay indifference, her light, sweet, untouched coldness of nature which made her charm for him. She was as virginal as a rose-bud and as lovely. Certainly Amaryllis would not suffer.

A hundred times he made up his mind to drift with the tide, a hundred times unmade it. That last laugh of Amaryllis had flung him into torments of jealousy this afternoon. But he would not turn back. He was on his way to Margaret. Only first he must rest and grow calm, for her tender, faithful eyes would discover the traces of recent conflict on his face. And where could a better place be found to rest than the Library? So he had turned in there and fallen asleep, worn out by sleeplessness and emotion, lulled by the fragrance of the lilies and the warmth of the drowsy air, full of the humming of innumerable bees.

He awoke cold, with the dew's from the garden upon his hair, and in a sleepy bewilderment. The moon was gone now; and there was only a dusky fragrance, sown with a million stars, outside the open window. The place had been in darkness but for a faint light, a light that wavered hither and thither.

He rose stiffly and looked beyond the recess. There was a figure holding a candle in its hand going from shelf to shelf, taking out a book and replacing it.

While he looked, the figure turned its head and lifted the candle high to see him the better.

What an odd figure it was! It was that of a man about sixty, dressed in clerical garb of an ancient cut with white bands, and wearing on its head a bagwig. Humphrey Brandon stared. The strange person looked at him with a piercing gaze from cavernous eyes. The face was ivory pale and was furrowed with the track of storms. Bitterness and desolation were in its expression.

"So you have awakened, sir," the visitor said grimly.

"I don't know how I came to fall asleep," answered Humphrey Brandon apologetically. "I suppose you are—the Dean?"

"I am the Dean," the other replied.

"I must have slept some time." Humphrey Brandon looked at his watch. "By Jove! half-past twelve! It was only half-past six when I came in. How did I come to do it? I was on my way to keep—an appointment."

"With Amaryllis or with Margaret?"

Humphrey Brandon stared at the sardonic face.

"How do you know?" he began, stammering.

"I am no wizard," the other replied. "You talked in your sleep. Amaryllis—Margaret: no scale could have balanced them more evenly." The hue of guilt crept into Humphrey Brandon's face. His lashes, dark and curling like a girl's, fell on his cheeks.

"You are a coxcomb," said the old man severely, putting down the candle in its old-fashioned candlestick on the Librarian's desk.

Some wild impulse to make confession and ask counsel came over the young man. He flung himself with a reckless air into one of the worn leather-covered chairs. "Perhaps I am," he said humbly. "Anyhow, Mr. Dean, you are ghostly—and I need ghostly counsel." The Dean snuffed the candle with a whimsical smile on his full lips. "It is your duty to help erring mortals. Will you not take the chair opposite to mine and listen to me?"

The Dean took the chair and dropped his cheek upon his hand. The bag-wig fell either side his face. Humphrey Brandon stared at him. Who was it he was like as he sat so? Some baffling memory played about the young man's mind and eluded him. He forgot it then, fascinated by the eyes in their cavernous hollows. They were burning as though they needed the slaking of tears. The face was the face of one deeply unhappy.

It was easier to pour out the tale of his vacillation to such a face. When he had finished there was a pause. Then the man opposite him sighed so hollowly that the young man started.

"I said you were a coxcomb," said the Dean, "but you are only a fool. You must go back to Margaret. Not for all the Amaryllises in the world would you break Margaret's heart. And you would break it, though she might live for twenty years after it was broken and show you always a smiling face. There are such women."

Humphrey Brandon, a creature of impulses, sprang to his feet, would have taken the Dean's hand if it had not been hidden some-

where in the folds of the gown, and cried out that the Dean was right : he would return to Margaret, and see Amaryllis no more till Margaret was his wife.

" It was fortunate I met you, sir," he said. " While I slept my soul was tossed about on a rack of pain. Dreams are heavy things."

" Do I not know them ? " replied the Dean. " Dreams, aye, and wakings. Over in yonder Deanery I have had such pangs as you could not dream of. There was a night when the torchlights burned in the church." He seemed as though he would have said more, but he broke off abruptly.

" Let me at least thank you," said the lad.

" If I have saved another soul from a crime like my own. . . ." Again the voice died off in a hollow sighing.

" Well, I shall be saying good-night, or rather good-morning," said the younger man, abashed, as though he looked on some suffering he had no right to see.

" Why, we are locked in," he said in surprise after trying the door. " But you have the key, Mr. Dean ? "

" I have no key. You must wait till the Librarian comes in the morning."

" But you ? You were locked in with me. How careless the Librarian must be."

" I am often here through the hours of the night."

" Ah, well, I shall go the garden way. I can drop from the window and scale the gates. See, it is morning. How the sky trembles ! "

All of a sudden he thought that the Library with its ancient books smelt mouldily ; it was the air of graves and charnel-houses. The east indeed was trembling like a multitude of wings. A bird called from the cedar and was answered by a drowsy twittering. He touched an ivy leaf and his hand was wet with dew. He could see the lilies glimmering in the dark of the garden. Their smell came sharp and fresh. He was going to Margaret, and he felt as though this were his wedding morning.

With his hand on the sill, in act to drop, he turned his face to say good-bye. But what had happened to the Dean ? He was standing as he had seen him first with the candle in his hand. But surely he was fading, fading into mists and dreams. A mere grey outline of a figure was there now, with only the eyes of it alive. As he stood staring they too went out and the Library was in darkness.

RICHARD DEHAN

B. 1864

A NURSERY TEA

THE driver of the rakish yellow dog-cart, hired from The Bluntell Arms, a white-faced tavern opposite the railway terminus four miles away, pulled up the lean-barrelled chestnut mare at a sign from the passenger, and touched the brim of his dusty bowler hat as the gentleman got down at the park gates of Fawncourt. The lodge-keeper's wife came out, wiping the soap-suds from her wrinkled hands, and opened the great wrought-iron gates for the visitor, and he passed in under the shield of the three wyverns rampant, and the cross crosslets, and the proud motto, *Sic fidem teneo*. He saw the gilding was tarnished and the metal rusted, and that one of the weather-stained limestone wyverns on the gate pillars had lost a leg, and he had a disgusted eye for the newly-washed garments of both sexes hung unblushingly to dry upon the rhododendrons as he threw the lodge-woman a shilling and walked rapidly into the avenue.

The park was rough and wild, and full of ancient, rugged oaks and beeches, the gardens were a sweet wilderness of autumn roses and tall white lilies within rankly-flourishing box borders. And then came the house—a Tudor building of ancient red brick, faced with creamy stone, standing on fair uncut lawns, drowsing in the rich black shadows flung by ancient cedars and giant yews.

The gentleman—a personable figure of a man—tall, lean, square-shouldered, and fashionably dressed—mounted the two wide steps shadowed by the double-columned portico, and would have rung the bell or plied the heavy copper knocker, but that he perceived in time the door was ajar. He pushed it with his stick and went into a vestibule paved with black and white Italian marble. A long oaken bench, dark with time, ran along the wall, dust obscured its polish at either end, in the middle was a clean patch. Here rested a man's hat, a sunburnt straw with a soiled London University ribbon. A hunting-crop, badly used, lay on the floor. And clumping boot-soles came clattering downstairs. The cold blue eyes lifted as the door in the screen swung open and calmly inspected the face of the newcomer,

a short, weather-beaten man of forty-five in a well-worn Norfolk suit of grey tweed.

"This is not yours, I think?" The voice was cultivated and rather musical, the tone languid and chill.

The short man picked up his old hunting-crop and put on the scorched hat. Then he looked at his watch, a handsome gold chronometer attached to a shabby strap, and clacked his tongue against his palate, and slipped the watch back into his pocket, and was going out into the fragrant sunshine when a question from the other stopped him.

"Are you Mr. Fladwheat's agent?"

"I am—not," said the short man in tweeds shortly.

"You don't happen to belong to the Estate Office at W——?"

"No."

"Pardon me. Not by any chance a representative of the *County Chronicle*—are you?"

"Not by any chance."

"Then," persisted the tall, well-dressed gentleman with the thin lips and cold blue eyes, "if I may venture upon another question, What were you doing upstairs?"

The short man in tweeds was plainly annoyed. His weather-beaten face grew red as he turned upon the persistent stranger.

"You want to know what I was doing upstairs? Visiting an old patient."

"Indeed. Then—you are—I presume you are—the medical practitioner who succeeded to old Dr. Carberry's practice——"

"Fifteen years ago, Sir Wilfrid."

The tall, thin gentleman frowned.

"A man who wants to preserve an incognito ought not to be the image of his father," said the Doctor coolly. "I met the late Baronet—in my business capacity—twelve years ago. He had run down with some friends for the shooting—an attack of rheumatic gout——"

"My father was a chronic sufferer from rheumatic gout in his later years," said the late Baronet's successor. "It touched his heart towards the end. He let the old place get into a devil of a state," he commented in a low, absent voice. "And the people who have rented it for shooting have made bad worse. And, now——"

"And now it is on the market," said the Doctor raspingly.

"Continuing the realisation of my—my—of my late father's estate,"

said the other, sweeping his cold eyes back from the sunny world outdoors to the wall immediately above the Doctor's head. "Messrs. Bewis and Moseley will sell the property for me at Tokenhouse-yard on Saturday next at twelve. The reserve price of the mansion-house, gardens, and park-land is seventeen thousand. So, Doctor, if you contemplate an investment——" He shrugged in infinite contempt.

"I'm a poor man," the Doctor flashed back, "but if I had the money I would buy Fawncourt to-morrow. Not to save it from the creditors." Sir Wilfrid Bluntell, drawing diagrams on the dusty pavement with the end of his slim umbrella, raised his eyebrows interrogatively, still perusing the wall above the Doctor's head. "Not for my own sake—what are historic bricks and ancient acres and three-hundred-year-old oaks to me? Not for my wife's sake—I'm a confirmed bachelor—but for *hers*." He jerked his worn hunting-crop towards the heavy beams and ancient mouldings of the ceiling.

"Might one be permitted to ask who *she* is?" said the Baronet's smooth voice.

"She is my patient," said the Doctor shortly. "You know her—or you have good reason to! And her name is Hannah Brown."

Sir Wilfrid's cold blue eyes dropped from the wall above his head and questioned him. "Hannah Brown. . . . Do you mean Nurse Brown? . . . Nurse Brown! . . . Why . . . I thought she . . . I supposed she was dead, like Hurst, the butler, and all the other old people. Alive! . . . By Jove! she must be a hundred if she's a day."

"As a fact, she is ninety," said the Doctor.

Sir Wilfrid went on without hearing. "She was laundry-maid in my grandfather's time, she nursed my father, he was always 'Master Reginald' to her, the pattern-boy held up to us"—he grinned a little. "She was head nurse when we—when we were kids. Nurse Hannah Brown—Nurse Brown." His face was creased into quite a boyish smile. His cold eyes had a twinkle. "How I used to worry her—up to all kinds of mischief, and dragging Gerry——" He broke off. "What you tell me is very interesting," he added nonchalantly. "I must go up and see the old lady before I leave. Frankly, I ran down to look over the old house before the sale; there are several bits of rare old china and carved oak presses which would fetch rattling prices at Christie's. As for books—the library was a desert in my time, with *Spectators* for palm-trees and Malory's *King Arthur*—the one well not brackish. Do you happen to know——"

"I happen to know one thing," said the Doctor stiffly, "and that concerns my patient."

"Nothing much the matter there, I hope?" said Sir Wilfrid.

"Old age," blurted out the Doctor with resentful eyes, gleaming through his spectacles, "and poverty and semi-starvation. Will you understand what I mean to convey, Sir Wilfrid Bluntell, or do you mean to play a comedy of ignorance with me? Since Sir Reginald left Fawncourt fifteen years ago, with glib promises and kind words, and hearty handshakes, and all the pinchbeck trash that she has always taken for pure gold, not a penny of her poor pension of £30, once her yearly wage, has ever been paid. But for charity, sir—*charity*—she would have died of want, and so I tell you to your face!"

"Your method of communicating the intelligence is offensive," said Sir Wilfrid, "but I give you credit for meaning well. As to Nurse Brown, I should have thought that in her seventy-four years of service she would have managed to save, to put by, to accumulate a considerable provision——"

The Doctor was foaming now. He gesticulated wildly with the hand that held his hunting-crop, and his small angry eyes snapped sparks. "So she had. Aye, aye! 'Saved,' 'put by,' 'accumulated' some £700. Hurst—old Hurst, the butler—made her buy Consols—she'd be getting some £21 the year—enough to keep body and soul together—just—her pension being forgotten by the family."

"Well?"

"Well!" The Doctor was now at white heat. "What else could one expect? Mind, she never uttered one complaint—I wormed the story out of her, inch by inch. The year before Sir Reginald died, down comes Mr. Gerald Bluntell——"

"My brother Gerald?"

"Yes. By the Lord! and proud would I be if he was mine. She cried for joy when he came to pay her a visit in the old nursery in the east wing there, and asked her to make him tea—in the same little old brown teapot he remembered. Boyhood's recollections—old ties—present troubles—pressing creditors to satisfy, no use going to Sir Reginald—ruin impending, in fact, which might be averted by a sum of ready money—nothing less than £700——"

"Spare me the *réchauffage* of Mr. Bluntell's misdeeds," said Sir Wilfrid, with a slight protesting gesture of his gloved hand. "As to his usage of this old servant of our family, it is strictly in accordance

with his character. I say no more and no less. My own affairs are—somewhat in confusion. All property that is not strictly entailed upon my son is to be sold. I cannot restore the old woman's money—even if I would. And I live in Paris; I have no home to offer her here. But when she is removed from Fawncourt—and it is necessary and advisable that she should go at once—a home shall be found for her in the village. She is already indebted to you for certain kind offices, I understand; perhaps you would not object to take charge of this?"

But the Doctor waved away the crackling £5 note.

"Give it her yourself, my good sir, since I understand your intention is to look in upon the poor old forgotten creature. But unless you desire to be guilty of her death say nothing about removing her to another home. This house has been her home for seventy-four years. She blossomed in its prime, and has fallen into decay with it. Ninety years old, and incredibly frail and feeble, she has not stirred out of the old nursery in the east wing for ten years or more. Pulse a mere thread—the heart's action liable to stop at any moment. . . . That she should have lived so long, and under such conditions, is a marvel, but there's lasting stuff in good old yeoman stock unvitiated by centuries of aristocratic vice and high-bred intemperance. Now remember—I have warned you!"

The Doctor's overworked straw hat was dabbed upon his head, the Doctor's heavy boots clumped away in the direction of the stable.

Sir Wilfrid shrugged his shoulders and pushed open the heavy wrought door in the carved screen, which would have to go with the other fixtures, otherwise . . . "Worth £1000," he said, with a little vexed whistle, as he passed through the semi-gloom of the hall, with its trophies of the chase and stands of rusted armour, and began the ascent of the great oaken staircase in a shaft of silvery-golden sunlight falling from the high mullioned windows on the landing. He mounted another staircase, the carpet under his feet ageing as he climbed, and turned down a well-remembered passage lighted by leaded casements. This was the oldest portion of the house. There were double doors at the passage-end, covered with faded green baize. They parted as Sir Wilfrid looked, and a rosy-cheeked country girl in a print dress and sun-bonnet came out, carrying a cup and plate. Her brown eyes widened at sight of the strange gentleman; she dipped a curtsey, village style,

as she slid by. Sir Wilfrid guessed her to be a niece or daughter of the caretaker. He went into the room.

It was low-pitched, panelled shoulder-high with blackened oak, and the plaster of walls and ceiling was cracked and browned with age, and mouldy in patches with damp. There was a lofty oaken chimney-piece, its pillars and centre-board scored with generations of initials burned in by childish hands, probably with the same little worn, bent poker that had always hung on a corner of the rusty, wrought-iron guard. Three casemented windows, whose cracked or broken panes had been pasted over with paper and rag, gave outlook to the south upon quiet, sloping lawns, browned with the fallen needles from giant cedars, whose sun-gilded trunks made the pillars of a Druid temple, roofed with their spreading boughs and sombre, spice-smelling foliage. And the door of an inner room, once the night-nursery, stood open, revealing three little rusty cot-beds in a row, and a heavy wooden cradle, with a broken rocker. A small fire burned between the wide hobs of the Queen Anne grate, and a small kettle sang upon it just as it used to sing, and Nurse Brown sat in a red-covered winged chair, her frail, old hands, with their idle knitting-pins, lying placid in her lap, her peaked chin sunk in the hollow of her bosom. There was no doubt of the "poverty," the "privations" of which the Doctor had spoken.

The man who looked on her had been her nursling and her darling, her tyrant and her god, as had his father before him. Some long atrophied fibre stirred in his cold, narrow heart, his hard eyes softened and grew kind. He felt almost tender towards this old, worn-out link with the old worn-out days. At the same time he shrank almost with dread from the idea of touching her. To be hugged, to be wept over! —the thought was almost unbearable; and yet he had sat upon those knees and kissed those withered lips, forty-five years ago. Nurse Brown had been a personable, buxom woman then, with brown hair only getting grey under her smart lace cap, and singularly bright, black eyes. A little smack of the country-side had flavoured her speech, plenty of good, shrewd common sense was wont to be upon her tongue, a homely humour modified her outlook upon the world, a homely loyalty was in her single-hearted belief in the goodness, virtue, nobility, beauty of every individual member of the Bluntell family, the "flower of the flock," as she repeatedly assured his descendants, having been her own first nursling, Master Reginald. Now, here she sat, that

faithful-serving soul—forgotten, bereft, unpitied. . . . It was a damned shame—a——

But Nurse Brown's bright, black eyes were open and looking at him.

"Master Wilfrid. . . . My own dear boy!"

Nurse Brown had got out of her chair somehow, and ran towards him, feebly and with outstretched hands. He caught them in his as she stumbled and seemed about to fall. They seemed to dissolve in his grasp for very frailness as he led her back to her chair. She shed a few tears there. The sight of him was good for sore eyes, she said, as she wiped her own.

"And you're the first to come, as I knew you would, Master Wilfrid." Her voice was a little tremulous, and thinner, but very like the voice that Sir Wilfrid remembered. He pulled up a chair and sat down, smiling, for the languid cynicism and flippant indifference of his former mood had fallen from him. He felt, sitting in the old Fawn-court nursery with the humble, homely creature at whose knee he had faltered his first petition to a Father in heaven, that it would have been well if his children had had a better earthly one.

"And you're the first. The eldest always sets an example. . . . When I look up and see you—There! I says, as was promised, my dear boy. And then Miss Gertrude and Master Gerald—and I forget what came next; but Him as the Rector comes regular to read about and talk of—and may He bless him for being that good to an old useless woman—He never breaks His word."

"She wanders a little," thought the man, as the brief, ecstatic smile faded from the keen-featured old face and a look of distress took its place. "Poor old soul!" Aloud he asked, "What is the matter?"

"The bit o' fire . . . going black out under the kettle . . . this day of all days, when my three children will be a-wanting o' their tea." There was a quaver in the old voice that heralded tears, and Sir Wilfrid made haste to say:

"Don't worry. Leave it to me—I'll make it burn up ali right."

"Maybe there's a bit o' wood in the cupboard side of chimney," said Nurse Brown, cheering. "Mrs. Pretty, the caretaker, she brings me a bundle every now an' then, or send it by her little gell. A good gell, Rhoda is, but too fond o' ribbons to please me. Do ye be careful, Master Wilfrid—you was always so venturesome wi' matches."

Sir Wilfrid, with an appearance of great absorption in the task, had found and stuck some little bits of dry apple-wood under the kettle, and was now drawing up the leaping spirelets of wavering green flame by dexterous use of a silk handkerchief.

"A fire's a treat to me," said Nurse Brown, "in these pinched days; though I've nothing to complain of—don't ye ever dream that, Master Wilfrid. There has been family i'barrassments—law troubles and such—or my Master Reginald—the first of them I nursed—would niver have forgot me. My Miss Gertrude!"

She had risen and stood upright, holding by the arm of her chair, her bright eyes fixed upon the door.

"There is nothing," said Sir Wilfrid. "You fancied you heard a footstep, that was all."

But Nurse Brown was obstinate, if the term can be applied to anything so feeble and soft and frail.

"Bless the boy!" she said with a gentle laugh, "does he suppose I don't know my own sweet girl's footstep from out among them all?—and there are hundreds of footsteps in this house, dear, of folks I know, and used to know, and others, dear, that were before me. Now it draws nearer. And now it's in the corridor—not so light as when she was a young thing and danced because she was too full o' life to walk—but a firm, free step. . . . Now the swing-doors, and now—her knock. Oh, my dear love, come in!"

Some one had actually knocked, and Sir Wilfrid leapt up, over-setting his chair, and breaking its worm-eaten back. The door opened, and a handsome woman crossed the threshold, and, with a little cry, stepped forward and embraced Nurse Brown, whose shrunken figure almost vanished amongst her chiffons and laces.

"You dear old, oid thing!" the newcomer gushed, and kissed the wrinkled cheek in a delicate, pecking, Society way. "Now, don't cry," she said, "I haven't much time to spend here." Then she recognised the tall, lean figure of the elder brother, whose cold blue eyes and thin, straight features bore much resemblance to her own. "Wilfrid! You here? How odd!" she uttered, with a little agitated catch of her breath.

"How are you, Gertrude?" he said, awkwardly for him, and came to her, offering his hand. She smiled wryly as she took it, for he had commanded his wife to "drop Gertrude" when Mrs. Consterdine had elected to burn her boats and leave her husband for Lord Vibart, and

the sum total of Wilfrid's own conjugal errors had but recently been added up by a British jury.

"Poor Millicent!" Lady Vibart had commented, "spending all that time and all that money in getting twelve men to agree that Wilfrid is to keep his distance—when he has never done anything else." Now she said, in response to her brother's stiff greeting, "Oh, clinking! and so is Vibart, thanks," and she smiled again, more naturally, as she unwound the latest thing in automobile veils and tossed it upon the table.

"You came down by road, I see?" her brother said.

"In Savarny's 'Napier,'" returned Lady Vibart, looking straight into her brother's eyes. "I had seen in yesterday's *Times* that Fawn-court was to be sold. I had had an idea that I should like to see the old place again—and—here I am."

"You have not brought Savarny?" said Sir Wilfrid.

"I have left him at The Stag and Arrow in the village," Lady Vibart said, "trying to order luncheon in what he believes to be English learned from me."

"I hope you will draw the line at learning from him any more of what you believe to be French," said Sir Wilfrid.

Lady Vibart showed her excellent white teeth in response and dropped a little mocking curtsy.

"*Merci, mon cher!* The caution comes admirably well from you!"

"Hush!" he said.

But thrust, parry, and riposte had glanced beside the true heart that had loved these worldly ones from birth. "Come, sit you down, my dear love," said Nurse Brown, fondling the jewelled hand that had grown cold between hers. "And, Master Wilfrid, you should never speak unkind to your sister. I mind, and so should you, how she cried outside the door when you was down wi' the measles, and broke open her money-box to buy you a new fishing-rod when you got well."

A less unfriendly look was interchanged between both pairs of cold blue eyes. The woman's glance asked, "Is she quite childish?"

The man replied:

"Far from it. She only occasionally confuses the Present with the Past."

The quavering old voice rose again:

"You'll kiss each other, dears, like a good boy and girl. Other-

wise the tea won't draw and there'll be no sugar on the bread-and-butter."

"You always used to say that, you dear old thing, when we were naughty," Lady Vibart cried. She straightened the poor shabby cap and patted the old, worn, veinous hands. "And where is the tea? I'm parched—simply."

"Drat my head—I've never wetted it!" The Nurse Brown of the past was revived from the ashes of the present. She sprang erect, renewed, to minister to her nurslings' needs. Age fell from her like a discarded shawl. Spellbound they sat and watched her as she bustled to the cupboard where the caddy lived; it was the little black japanned one they remembered of old. She drew a crusty loaf from a biscuit-tin, she produced butter from a jam-pot, she conjured from various hiding-places plates, cups, knives, teaspoons, a teapot, sugar. To and fro, to and fro between the table and the cupboard and the fireplace the bent figure journeyed, intent on service, unconscious of toil. The kettle boiled, the teapot was warmed, the infusion made. Triumphant she bade them draw to the table, spread with all her scanty store.

"And manners, my dearies, remember. If I'm humble myself, I know how my betters should behave. Yes, Master Wilfrid, you may cut the bread. Miss Gertrude likes to butter it—there'll only be brown sugar on the second slice. When you're grand grown man and woman you'll remember how happy you made yourselves in the old Fawncourt nursery, with Nurse Brown, and a bit o' bread-and-butter, and a cup o' tea."

"Dear old thing! I have often—often remembered it," said Lady Vibart with a sigh.

"And so has Master Wilfrid . . . and so has my boy Gerald. There! to think of me forgetting my boy. Whatever can have come to him?"

Nurse rose as though to run in search.

"Sit down . . ." said Sir Wilfrid, falling unconsciously into school-boy idiom in humouring her. "Gerry's all right. You'll see him presently, as safe as houses."

"Oh, Will!" his sister protested below her breath.

"He's watching the fallow deer, or the big pike in the pond, with them big bright eyes of his," said Nurse Brown, putting the teapot to stand on the hob for "her boy," and reserving a Benjamin's portion

of bread-and-butter. "The Lord be hears the prayers I put up that no harm may come to him. When you grows up, Master Wilfrid, love, you'll have your seat in the House of Commons like your grandfather, and make the longest and grandest speeches, you will, on every subject that can be brought up, without committing your party, as I've heard it called, to anything whatsoever. But Master Gerry will be a—what do they call the gentleman with the laurel wreath as Queen Victoria pays thousands a year to for writing poetry?"

"Laureate," suggested Lady Vibart.

"And that's what my sweet boy will be, Heaven ever bless him!" said Nurse proudly. "You'll be married, Miss Gerty, dear, before Master Gerry is crowned; but mark my words, the day will come. And you'll be only less proud of your brother then than you will be of your husband. He'll be dark-complexioned as you are fair, and you'll bring the dear babe down to Fawncourt to get the country air and sleep in the old nursery; and a good mother you'll make, love, that are that fond of your dolls to-day."

"My God, my God!" broke from Lady Vibart in a suffocated voice, "why was I so mad as to come here? Why——?"

"Pull yourself together," said Sir Wilfrid, leaning to her ear. "Brave it out—lie, act as women can. It is the one thing we can do for her—never to let her guess the truth. Do you know what she has suffered at our hands? Gerald stole her savings, our father ceased to pay her poor pension long before he died——"

"Impossible! Oh, Will, say it is not true!"

"I—damn me for it!—forgot her. So did you."

"I—I am afraid I did!" admitted Lady Vibart.

Sir Wilfrid went on: "But for the Doctor's charity—but for the Doctor's help she would have *died*. What's that?"

"That" was another step upon the landing, a new touch upon the rattling handle of the door. Lady Vibart rose with a little cry of recognition. Sir Wilfrid sat still as stone.

"Shut the door behind you, Master Gerald, there's my own boy," said Nurse in a tone of calm authority, "and put down your hat, and come to the table. Your tea's a-waiting and your bread-and-butter's cut."

"And I'm confoundedly hungry and infernally thirsty," said the prodigal, accepting the invitation.

"Don't let me hear you make use of grown gentlemen's bad

language again, Master Gerald," warned Nurse Brown, returning from the hob, teapot in hand, "or I shall be compelled to put you to bed without your tea. Make room for your brother, do, Miss Gerty, and hand him the bread-and-butter."

"She's awfully old!" said Gerald Bluntell under his breath. "It frightens me to look at her—by Jove, it does!"

"I am glad to hear you have so much conscience left," said Lady Vibart icily.

"What do you mean? What the—what do you mean?" snarled the prodigal.

"Now, that's not pretty, Master Gerald, my lamb, to talk to your sister so," said Nurse Brown, and the lamb subsided with a scowl. "And you know he was a weakly babe, Miss Gerty, and your dear, sweet mother, my blessed lady now with Them above—made you promise to be a kind elder sister to your little brother. I can see my lady now, leaning back amongst her great embroidered pillows, with her big, bright eyes shining like stars, and her colour as pink as roses, and the little lace shawl—French lace, hundreds of years old—tied over her lovely head. And every night she prayed on her two knees that her three children might grow up good."

The shadows without had grown longer, the sunlight mellow and less intense. An owl, waking from the daylight sleep, swooped noiselessly from one tree into another, and the shrill, alarmed protest of an angry mother-bird followed on the predatory visit.

"She'll be afeard for her nestlings, poor thing!" said Nurse Brown, who had returned to the red arm-chair, after offering that throne successively to each of her visitors, "and well she may. They be silly-looking, hook-nosed things by day, they owls, though bodeful and dreadful enough on moonlight nights, the screechers specially. I had a nursery-maid in your dear father's time, my children, that was mortal afeard o' owls. Rhoda Pretty, the gell as does my bit o' marketing, be her granddaughter, and nigh as skeery. Eh, dears, what days they was to be sure! The head nurse, whose place I got after, and me as second, the nursery-maid, and a scrubbing-maid, that was, the nursery staff. And Sir Reginald, the loveliest boy with the flaxenest curls that ever was a nurse's pride. None of his children had his pretty ways or his tender heart—though I say it to your faces, dears!"

"Fancy the old governor!" said the prodigal under his breath,

"with pretty ways and a tender heart. Good Lord!" he chuckled drearly.

"Bless him! I thought he never would a-done mourning over the leg o' mutton for the nursery dinner that had once belonged to a live sheep." Nurse Brown's flow of reminiscence was interrupted by a yawn.

"We have tired you," said Lady Vibart gently, drawing a stool to the side of the red arm-chair. She remembered Savarny, waiting at the inn in the village, she wished intensely to escape from the stinging memories and gnawing regrets that hived under the roof of Fawncourt—she bitterly upbraided herself for having had the idiocy to come; and yet—she looked at the prodigal, and refrained from taking leave. Some latent instinct of protection towards the feeble, childish, trusting creature who had already suffered plunder at his greedy hands—might suffer it again—awakened in her. Tardy gratitude for all the wealth of love, all the treasures of loyalty and fidelity hung like despised garlands about such worthless necks, outpoured at such shapeless feet of vulgar clay, moistened her cold eyes and melted her frozen heart. She gulped a little sob and fumbled for her handkerchief—an absurd square inch of gossamer cambric, bordered with a frill. She did not waste time in regretting the past, but she wished that things had been different! Dim-eyed, she reached forth to touch the withered hand, and found it covered by another—Wilfrid's! and the prodigal Gerald was sitting on a ragged hassock at Nurse Brown's feet.

"This is like blessed old times," said Nurse Brown, "wi' all my children round me. 'Twas promised—and I knew the promise would be kept—as I should have this good hour—and now it has come to me. All my children—that is, saving one. And him——"

"What was that?"

"What was what, Miss Gerty, dear?" asked Nurse.

Lady Vibart had uttered the exclamation. "It is quite absurd," she said with a little empty laugh, "and I know my nerves must have played me a trick, but a child in a little old-fashioned white pelisse and tartan sash actually peeped in at us just now from the old night-nursery."

"A neighbour's child—possibly the caretaker's," said Sir Wilfrid, clearing his throat.

"Perhaps. . . . Ah! there it is again. No, it has gone!"

"A white embroidered frock and a Rob-Roy sash and yellow curls,

pale, like ripe barley, not gold, like corn, had he ? " said Nurse Brown, smiling wisely inside her cap-border.

" That's the kiddy," assented the prodigal. " I saw him as well as Gerty. Looked round the door and laughed . . . and then dodged back again. I hear him chuckling now, I'm almost certain."

" Take no notice, and maybe he'll come out," said Nurse. " 'Twould be hard if my own boy were kep' back, when the promise was for all. By-and-by, when the sun has wested and the shadows get longer, he'll grow more venturesome. I've heerd him behind my chair—ah ! a many, many times ; but when I turns, sweet love, he's always hiding. Tell me if you sees him again, dear ! "

" She means our father," Sir Wilfrid whispered to Lady Vibart.

Nurse Brown—strangely keen of hearing and alert of perception in this her hour of joy—gave a little triumphant laugh.

" To be sure ! My own boy—the first of all I nursed—who should I mean else ? It's wonderful the love a woman can feel for them she never bore. Even if ye had grown up warped and blighted, cold-hearted, bad-natured, wicked, instead of noble, good, grand, 'twould be all the same to me. What I lulled to sleep in my old arms and saw thrive under my fostering, could I ever come to hate it ? And that's how the Lord above looks upon His children. Eh, loves, 'tis getting dark."

A flash of lightning pierced the gathering gloom with a shaft of fierce blue radiance, and a rushing pattering sound of heavy rain followed the dull boom of distant cloud-artillery.

" When this is over I must positively escape," reflected Lady Vibart, and the panes streamed and the roof-gutters vomited. The half-admitted dread of the lonely journey through the deserted corridors, down the wide desolate staircases, the semi-conscious fear of meeting—something ! made her draw her laces and chiffons closer about her, and hope that Wilfrid would in decency propose to see her to the door. As for Gerald, how could she hope to prevent him from carrying out whatever purpose he had in view ? If he chose to remain—remain he must. The results of the raid would be discouraging enough to prevent his making another, and to-morrow—welcome to-morrow !—she would send Nurse enough money to keep the dear old thing in comfort for a decent time. But how dark it was ! and how the rain poured and beat against the casements and clanked upon the flagstones of the terrace far below ! Cool earth-odours, spicy cedar-smells stole in from the

wet outer world mingling with the suggestions of dry-rot, the palpable hints of mice, the dampness that the little dying fire in the Queen Anne grate had no power to conquer. She shivered. A vision rose before her of drear, wet autumns, long, freezing winters, nipping, piercing springs spent in this place, alone, by this old, old feeble woman. Scarce fed, clothed in garments as ancient as her remembrances, less lasting than her faithful love. A rigor of cold and horror seized her, she shivered again, setting her teeth, and shutting her eyes and hands. In the increasing gloom so acute was her sense of desolation that she moved nearer to her brother Wilfrid, and was sensible that he drew closer to her. At last she touched his shoulder, and he put his arm about her. And the Prodigal, presuming but unrebuked, leaned his fast grizzling head against his sister's knee. So like, but so different to, the group that had gathered here in the old days when they were "Will" and "Gerty" and "Gerry" to each other, and Fawncourt was their Paradise, into which no serpent had entered yet. So changed and yet so much the same, they sat together now. A common love had stirred in their cold breasts, however faintly, a common sympathy had moved them, a regret had been shared, a remorse had stung them equally; an unacknowledged awe, a secret terror of unknown powers that might be gathering round them in the shadows united them in a common bond. Children again, they huddled together in the semi-obscurity—these three who were to go upon their way so shortly, uttering cold farewells, never to meet again on earth. They stilled their breathing and listened, and could have sworn to footsteps on the stairs, to voices in the corridors, to strains of music—once to a burst of laughter—that came peeling upwards from the locked-up, shuttered dining-room. Time passed, the rain had ceased, the sun had set, and the sky was a lake of pale rosy yellow behind the black umbrage of the dripping cedars.

"What a strange shadow—there upon the floor . . ."

One of the three Bluntells had spoken, or none. The uttered words might have been the crystallised thought of all three brains. But Nurse made answer:

"It be, my love. It have frightened me by times when it took shape like that. Whether 'tis the shadow of the gable over window or what else I never guess. Black, and long and heavy, with an edge of clear light. And the shape of a bier. And a figure on it with a face; there now—it's edge to me! And I seems sometimes to know

whose it is, and sometimes not. Last time it came it were my boy, your dear father, Sir Reginald, lie there so still. And now——! See, dear loves, it be a woman . . . a-lying like a carved stone queen upon a monument, a-waiting for the Last Trump to stir the dust an' bid the dry bones live. And but that I never was so grand, my children, I'd say it were myself."

Silence again fell and the rose-yellow sky grew grey, a north wind swayed the cedar branches, and the last drops trickled from the gargyle-mouthed roof gutters. The last spark of the fire died out, the cold shadows gathered closer. Then Lady Vibart called out suddenly in sharp alarm :

"How strangely she is breathing! Strike a light, if either of you have matches. Nurse! Nurse Brown!"

"I will send for the Doctor," said Sir Wilfrid hurriedly, as the vesta scraped and flared and burned out, and the hand that he had lifted fell inertly from his own. But the bright black eyes opened a moment later, and——

"My boy a-crying," said Nurse. "Why frightened of the dark, my love, and me so near? I'm a-coming, Master Reginald! I'm a-coming, my love. . . . That were the promise, after long waiting—as I should go—wi' all my—children by. The Lord bless my dear loves, my kind loves—that came before—the end!"

The worn old body quivered, and the last breath went out in a happy sigh, as Nurse laid down the burden of her many years, and went upon her way.

SHAN F. BULLOCK

B. 1865

THEY THAT MOURN

BUNN market was over, its hurry and haggle. In corners and quiet spots of the big market-yard, you saw men and women carefully counting their little stores of silver, testing the coins with their teeth, knotting them firmly in red pocket-handkerchiefs, finally stowing them away in their long wide pockets as cautiously as though every sixpence were a diamond. In the streets, people were leisurely moving towards the shops, where tills were rattling, and counters teeming, and trade, for a few hours, mightily flourishing after its whole six days of blissful stagnation.

A cart laden with butter, chiefly in firkins, issued from the market-yard gate, a man between the shafts, one at either wheel, two pulling behind, all noisily endeavouring to keep the cart from running amuck downhill into the river. Close behind, like chief mourners after a hearse, one might fancy, came Tim Kerin and Nan his wife ; a battered, slow-footed couple, heavily burdened with the big load of their years, white haired both of them, and lean as greyhounds. Heavily they shuffled along in their clumsy boots ; the man with one arm across his back, the other swinging limply ; the woman holding up her skirt with one hand, and gripping with the other the handle of an empty basket ; both looking fixedly over the tail-board of the cart at the few pounds of butter for which they had slaved hard for weeks, and for which, after hours of haggling, they had just received a few most precious shillings. Fixedly they watched it, and mournfully almost, as though they were bidding it a last farewell.

They passed through the gate, straggled across the footpath, and silently watched the cart zigzag down the street, run presently against the kerb, and, amid great shouting, discharge its contents into the packing-house.

"Faith," said Tim, across his shoulder, "'twas cleverly done. I wonder, some day, they don't break their necks." He wagged his head dubiously ; Nan tucked up her skirt ; the two turned their faces

uphill, and set out to share their profits with the shops. The butter was gone, and sorrow go with it : 'twas a heartbreak.

Tim Kerin's share of the profits was a shining sixpence, reluctantly tendered to him by Nan his wife, who now walked a couple of steps behind him, with eighteenpence shut tight in her hand, and the remainder of the butter-money (only a shilling or two) tied fast in a cotton bag and safely stowed away in the neck of her linsey-woolsey dress. Threepence of Tim's sixpence was to buy tobacco, a penny might go in the purchase of a weekly newspaper, a penny would buy a pair of whangs (leather laces) for his boots ; the penny remaining, when all those luxuries had been honestly paid for, would buy a whole tumblerful of frothing porter. A whole tumblerful ! At sight of it, with his mind's eye, Tim's lips dried and his feet went quicker over the cobble stones.

Nan's lips were tight, her brow wrinkled. She was figuring. It would take her to be powerful 'cute to fill her basket with the value of eighteenpence. Och, the lot o' things she wanted : tea, sugar, bacon, a herring for the Sunday's dinner, a bit o' white bread—and—and supposing there were a penny or two over (with knowing bargaining there might be), was it likely, now, that Mr. Murphy, the draper, would let her have cheap a yard of narrow soiled lace to go round the border of her nightcaps ? Twopence might do, threepence would be sure to—— Aw, glory be to goodness, did anybody ever hear of such romancin', such extravagance ? Sure it was runnin' wild her wits were ! Threepence for lace indeed !

A friend stepped from behind a cart and caught Nan by the arm. What ! was it pass a neighbour like that Mrs. Kerin would do ? Pass her ouldest friend, Mrs. Brady, as if she were a milestone, and never pass the time of day, or tell how she sold her butter, or how the world was using herself ? " Och, och, Mrs. Kerin," moaned Mrs. Brady, " what have I done to ye at all, at all ? "

Nan stopped and put out her hand ; then volubly began explaining : sure, sorrow the sight of Mrs. Brady she had seen ; sure, she never passed a neighbour without speaking ; sure, 'twas walking along romancin' she was, figuring in her head, seeing how far she could make the few shillings go. " An' how are you, ma'am ? " asked Nan, when full pardon for her oversight had been generously given and gratefully received. " How are you an' all your care ? "

Swiftly the two old heads bobbed together ; ceaselessly the tongues

began to wag ; freely the full tide of their softly drawling speech flowed gurgling round the little nothings of their little world.

Meanwhile, Tim, his sixpence hot in his palm, had taken a turn through the throng of the streets ; had questioned his neighbours about sales and prices (just as though his pockets bulged with bank-notes) ; had spelt out the time on the big market-house clock as he stood by the town pump listening to the hoarse drone of a ballad singer ; and now, on the sidewalk of Main Street, stood dreamily looking through a shop window at a pile of newspapers which stood precariously among an array of tobacco pipes and sweet bottles. If he bought a paper, Tim was thinking, he would have a whole week's diversion o' nights ; if he didn't buy it, he would save the price of another tumblerful o'—— A heavy hand fell on his shoulder.

" Hello, Tim," said his neighbour, Shan Grogan ; " havin' a wee squint at the sugar-sticks is it, ye are ? "

" Aw ay," answered Tim, turning ; " aw ay ! I was just lookin' at the papers there, an' wonderin' what an ojus lot o' news they give us nowa-days for a penny. Enough to keep one goin' for a week. Powerful it is."

" Yis," said Shan ; " it's a wonderful world. But aisy, Tim ; ha' ye been to the Post lately ? "

" Naw," said Tim.

" Well, look in there if you're passin', me son. The lassie that sells the stamps asked me to tell ye. Away quick ; mebbe she'll give ye news for nothin'."

" Now, now," answered Tim. " I'm obliged to ye, Shan ; I'm obliged to ye. Now, now," he repeated to himself, as he shuffled off along the pavement ; " now, now. Is Shan havin' a wee joke, I wonder ? " he said ; and coming to the post-office doubtfully sidled in.

" Me name is Kerin, Miss," he said to the clerk, very humbly as to one of the representatives of mighty Government itself, " Tim for Christian ; an' they tell me ye 'd mebbe be havin' somethin' for me ? "

The girl handed him a letter bearing the Chicago postmark, stamped in one of the bottom corners, and carrying its address thence right up to the top of the envelope. Tim bore it tenderly to the door and carefully inspected it ; then took it back to the counter.

" Whose countersign might that be, Miss, if ye please ? " he asked, and placed his thumb over the postmark. Humbly he asked ; curtly he was answered.

" Chicago ? " said Tim. " Ay, ay ! I'm obliged to ye, Miss ; I'm

obliged to ye. May the Lord be good to ye, an' send ye a duke for a husband. Good-day to ye, Miss," said he ; then, with his hand deep in his pocket and the letter in his hand, stepped out into the street and went off in search of Nan.

It's from Padeen, he kept thinking to himself, as he walked joyfully along, his feet clattering loosely on the pavement, his old face turning here and there, watching for his wife ; it's from Padeen, sure as ever was. Aw ! but he was glad. Aw ! but Nan would be glad. So long it was, ages and ages ago, since they heard from him. 'Twasn't Padeen's hand-write—naw ! but sure it might have altered ; everything altered in the Big Country. Ay ! 'twas only poor ould Ireland that kept the same—never any worse, never any better. But where was Nan ? Sure she ought to be in the shops. He was dying to find her. Up and down he went ; at last found her still bobbing heads at the top of Bridge Street with her friend Mrs. Brady.

"Aw, it's here ye are, Nan ?" said he, coming up. "An' me huntin' the town for ye. It's yourself is well, Mrs. Brady, I'm hopin' ? That's right, that's right."

His voice came strangely broken and shrill ; his eyes danced like a child's ; still his hand gripped the letter in his pocket.

"What's the matter, Tim ?" whispered Nan. "Is it news ye have ?"

"Ay, ay," he answered. "Come away till I tell ye ; come away."

He turned and, with Nan at his heels, set off almost at a run downhill towards the river. Aw ! but his heart was thumpin'.

"Aisy, Tim," cried Nan behind him ; "aisy, man, or me breath—me breath——"

Without answering, or slackening his pace, Tim went on, turned through the butter-market gate, crossed the empty yard, came to the furthest corner of one of the long low sheds, and there halted, with his face to the wall. Aw ! but his heart was thumpin'. Presently, Nan came to him, panting and flurried.

"What is it, Tim ?" she asked ; "what is it ?"

Slowly Tim brought out his letter, and, holding it by both hands, let his wife look at it.

"It's—it's from Padeen !" cried she ; "it's from Padeen !"

"Yis," said Tim ; "yis. It's not his hand-write ; but—but it must be from him."

"Aw, glory be to God !" cried Nan. "Glory be to God ! Sure it's ages since we heard from the boy, ages !"

She put down her basket, and, with her head between Tim's shoulder and the wall, looked fixedly at the envelope. Aw! but she was glad to see it. Such a time it was since they had heard from Padeen! A whole two years it was, come Christmas, since the last letter came, with that money order in it, an' the beautiful picture of Padeen himself, dressed out in his grand clothes, with a gold chain across his waistcoat, and a big gold ring on his finger. A whole two years almost. And now maybe——

"Aw, Tim, open it quick," she panted; "open it quick!"

"Mebbe," said Tim, "we'd better wait till we get home. The light's bad, an'——"

"No—no, Tim! No—no; it'd kill me to wait."

"Ay?" said Tim; then slowly drew his knife from his pocket and tenderly cut open the top of the envelope. His fingers trembled greatly as he fumbled with the enclosure. Nan's hand went quick to her heart.

"Aw, quick, Tim!" she cried. "Quick, quick!"

"Don't—don't flooster me, woman," said Tim; "I can't—can't——" The next moment his shaking old fingers held a sheet of notepaper, and a black-edged card on which, in large letters, beneath a long silvern cross, were the words: PATRICK KERIN.

Nan fell back a step; her fingers clutched at her dress over her heart. Tim's knife clattered upon the stones, and the envelope fluttered down. For a while they stood there silent, dread-stricken. At last Nan spoke. "Read, Tim," she said. "Read!"

"I—I can't."

"Ye must, Tim; it's better. Let us know the worst, for God's sake! Read, Tim."

"I—I——," Tim began; then quickly opened the sheet. "It's—it's too dark here," he mumbled; "I—I want me specs."

"Read what ye can, Tim—an' quick, for God's sake!"

So Tim, still with his face to the wall, raised the letter to catch the light, and began to read:

CHICAGO CITY, U.S.A.

DEAR—DEAR MISTER KERIN,—It is my—my sad duty to in-form you that your son Patrick died ("Aw, Padeen, Padeen!") of ty—typhus here on the 2nd of this month at twelve o'clock a.m. ("God's mercy!" cried Nan). As his oldest friend, I was with him at the end. He died in peace. He was buried at his request in —— Cemetery. I—I send you something to—to keep . . .

"Aw, I can read no more," said Tim, with a groan; "it's too dark. I can read no more. Me poor ould Padeen!"

Nan turned and looked vacantly across at the busy street, dry-eyed and grey-faced. Ah! her poor Padeen, dead and buried away among the strangers, dead and buried, and never, never would she see him again, never hear his voice, never grip his hand! Dead, dead! her big, handsome, noble son . . .

She turned to Tim and caught him by the sleeve.

"Come away home, Tim," she said. "Come away wi' me." Tim looked at her.

"Ah! Nan, Nan," he said, as the big tears sprang to his eyes. "Nan, me girl, but it's hard!"

"Ah yis," said she, and lifted her basket; "but come away, Tim, come away. Home's the best place for us."

"Yis," said Tim, wiping his eyes with his hand. "Yis, Nan." Then, Nan leading the way and Tim shuffling after, the two old people (mourners now in real earnest) crossed the yard; and at the gate Nan halted.

"I think," said she, as Tim came up, "I think we can manage this week wi'out the bits o' groceries. Sure they're only luxuries anyway. I'll go an' see if Mr. Murphy can find me a bit o' crape for me bonnet. Yis."

"Do," said Tim. "Do, Nan; an' when you're about it," he said, taking his sixpence from his pocket and handing it to her, "ye may as well get me a bit for me hat. Ay! sure I can do wi'out me tabaccy for one wee'. Aw yis! Away quick, Nan; an' hurry back, me girl, hurry back."

So Nan turned up towards the market-house; but Tim went downhill towards the bridge; and when, presently, Nan came to him, carrying her little packet of crape in her big basket, Tim's head was bowed over the parapet and he was mumbling tearfully: "Aw, me poor Padeen, me poor Padeen!"

Nan plucked at his sleeve.

"Come away home, Tim," she said; "come away." And at the word Tim raised his head, dried his eyes, and set off slowly after Nan up the long, dusty road that wearily led towards home.

TH' OULD BOY

SEAN F. BULLOCK

BELOW in the kitchen, the plebeians were making merry with quip and crank, pipe and glass, as they sat round the walls and here and there over the floor in the warmth of the great peat fire ; their laughter and chatter (subdued though it was, or tried to be) was heard distinctly above in the little parlour, where, round a well-spread table, sat a select company—the *élite* of the wake, you might say—gravely stirring their tea, eating their ham, discoursing on the merits and virtues (now, many of them, first brought to light) of the man who oftentimes had made merry at that very table, and now lay stark and lonely in a room beyond the kitchen.

“ Ay, ay,” sobbed the widow from her place behind the teacups ; “ it’s God’s truth ; he was the generous heart an’ the tender. Och, the heart av a child ! ”

The spoons clinked dolefully round the cups ; the men solemnly wagged their heads ; the women sniffed and, to conquer emotion, tried buttered toast.

“ How often, here in this very room,” the widow went on, “ did I hear him spake the word. Ay, ay ! An’ ’twas the great gift o’ prayer he had. Ah, ye all know it.”

“ Ay, ay,” went the voices ; “ we do, we do ; ’twas powerful, powerful ! ”

“ An’ now he’s tuk from us—tuk, tuk,” cried the widow ; “ gone an’ left us to struggle alone wi’ Satan. Ah, dear, dear ! ”

The men were bent over their plates, the women biting their lips ; it was blessed relief when the hard, level voice of Red John went out through the doleful assembly.

“ It’s truth ye say, ma’am,” said John ; “ an’ may your man be safe in glory (*Amen—Amen*, went the voices). But for yourself, have no fear o’ Satan an’ all his works : next time he makes bold to struggle wi’ ye, just ax him if he remembers Red John : that’ll settle him.”

With one accord, all eyes were raised and turned wonderingly towards the bottom of the table, where, one hand thrust carelessly into

his waistcoat pocket, the other idly playing with his knife, sat Red John : a big man he was, red-headed, and with a strong, impassive face. " You're all wonderin' ? " he went on, raising his eyes. " Well, ye needn't. I say to ye all once more : next time Satan tries strugglin', just mention me : that'll finish him."

Swiftly vanished sorrow and dole ; the men found their big, coarse voices ; the women pocketed their handkerchiefs : all, even the widow herself, called on John to explain.

" Ye mean to say ye never heard ? " asked John. " No ? Well, well. Such is life ; an' meself has told the story a score o' times. No odds. Here ye are. An' mind," he added, shaking his finger, " no interruptions, an' no sayin' I'm a liar when I'm done. . . . Of course, ma'am ; of course I'll wait a minute in welcome ; an' just ax them down there to keep their bulls' voices quiet. Ye know," he went on, as the widow went out for a moment (carrying tobacco, or a bottle, or something, for the plebeians in the kitchen), " it'll niver do to let the poor thing fret. Och, no ; an' there's nothin' like a story to keep the heart from care. . . . Back again, ma'am ? Well, then, 'twas like this : " One day—ay, years ago—word came to me that Long Bob was runnin' a brewin' o' poteen. Now, when Long Bob brews, I'm off ; for let him use treacle, or malt, or whatever he chooses, there's no man these parts (an' I've interviewed a few) can make stuff to grip your tongue like he can. No matter. Soon as I heard word, off I went, for I wanted no dregs ; an' after a three-mile pull in the cot at last came to a wee island out in the lake, and there, in the middle o' the scrub an' the stones, was me darlint Still firin' away ; an' round it a party o'—Well, never mind, there was more than *one* there I knew, an' all made me welcome. Ah, 'twas great stuff that ; with a whiff off it like the middle o' a haystack, an' not a bite in a gallon of it. . . . Och, och, ma'am, is there anything behind ye there in the press ? Sure a toothful'd send the words *flowin'* out o' me. . . . That's right, that's right. *Hurroo !* Now now, only a toothful I said, ma'am ; well, so be it. I'll do me endeavours.

" Well," Red John went on, when the company had drunk the widow's health and wished her long life, " I pass by all that happened there, just sayin' that we had great times, an' that when about dusk I set out for home I held a tidy sup besides the two lemonade bottles full in me tail pocket. It was a cowl'd night, an' ye know it's lonesome work draggin' a cot about a lake : so I'll not deny but mebbe I *did* wet me lips once or twice on the way ; an' I'll acknowledge straight that

when I landed it took more than a drop to take the stiffness out o' me joints. But mark me, ma'am, an' all o' ye, ye mus'n't run away wi' the notion that I was fuddled ; I held me share, but I was as steady on me pins when I stepped out home as I am the night, an' as clear in the head as yourself, ma'am ; long life to ye an' your very good health. . . . *Me smilin' little Cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,*" sang John in chorus with the plebeians in the kitchen, beating time with his tumbler on the table—*Me smilin' lit-tle Crui-skeen lawn !*

" 'Twas about eleven o'clock—more or less, I'll not say as I'm strivin' for the truth, when I got home. Mary an' the childer were all in bed, an' there was a glimmer in the lamp, an' a pot o' porridge waitin' for me over a snug fire ; so down I sits an' makes me supper ; then lights the pipe and was goin' over (meanin' to make meself comfortable) to hang me coat on the back o' the door when, badness to me, if I didn't catch sight o' the neck o' a bottle stickin' out o' the tail pocket. ' Och, och,' says I, scratchin' me head, ' but it's the sore temptation, och, och ! I wonder now would a wee sup hurt one ? ' An' afore I could make up me mind, the cork was out o' the bottle an' with some o' the poteen in a mug I was over by the dresser liftin' a sup o' water out of a can that stood on the floor.

" Now you'll attend to this, ma'am, an' the rest o' ye ; for it's here the fun begins an' it's here I'll be truthfuller than ever. Just as I was stoopin' to get the water, there was a shakin' in the house, an' a blue flash that kind o' dazzled me ; an' with that I turns round sharp—when, lo and behold ye, there, sittin' by the fire, wi' his legs crossed an' him lookin' straight at me, was as fine a lookin' gentleman as ever I clapped eyes on. All dressed in black he was, wi' a big cloak fallin' to the ground, an' a top hat, if ye please ; an' his hair black, an' his face shaved, an' sorrow a smell o' jewelry on his person. Arrah, Lord save us, thinks I to meself, who are ye at all, an' where did ye come from ? An', somehow, the way he sat there that cool, an' the *devilish* way he looked at me set me shakin' ; if it hadn't been for the sup in the mug I'd ha' dropped on the floor. But the poteen gave me courage ; an' wi' that I minded me manners an' spakes out.

" ' Good evenin', sir,' says I ; ' it's pretty late ye'll be ? ' He looked straight at me, keepin' his legs crossed, an' not one word he answered. Then, thinkin', maybe, he was hard o' hearin' I spakes again. " ' Good evenin', sir,' says I ; ' is it missed your way ye have the night ? ' " But sorrow a word ; there he sat in the chair—just as ye are yourself, ma'am, beggin' pardon an' meanin' no comparisons ;

an' never moved hand or foot or budged a lip. So I scratched me head an' cast about what I was to do ; for I couldn't keep standin' there like a fool, an' I was afraid to move. What in glory, thinks I, am I to do ? Then all of a sudden the thought struck me ; an' round I turns to the coat hangin' on the back o' the door, an' takes th' other lemonade bottle out o' the pocket. " ' Axin' your pardon, sir,' says I, ' but if it's not makin' bold, could I offer ye the least taste just to keep the raw from your bones ? '

" Not a word he answered ; but, thinks I, there's a twinkle in your eye, me boy, that looks as if you'd be partial to a drop ; an' ye all know a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse. So, keepin' an eye on him over me shoulder, I turned an' got another mug off the dresser, an' mixin' a tidy dose I went across the floor an' offered it t' him. Like a lamb, sirs, he took it ; gulped it down an' smacked his lips on the last drop. But see here, ma'am ; may I never see light ! if the draught didn't turn into blue blazes in his throat. Ye laugh ? Well, don't then, if it isn't at your own ignorance. Laugh ! troth most o' ye'll see worse than that after ye die." And John winked over his glass at the company.

" Well, thunder an' turf, thinks I to meself, what kind of a customer is this ? Sure if he'd be sociable even it 'd not be so bad. How-somede'er, thinks I, I'll make meself at home by me own fire ; an' down I plops on a stool fornenst him, pulls out the cutty, fills it, an' lights up. After a couple o' whiffs I wipes the shank on me coat an' offers it to him.

" ' Mebbe you'd like a draw ? ' says I, holdin' the cutty to him across the hearth ; ' people these parts say it goes well wi' poteen.'

" He reached out an' tuk it, knocked the ashes off it, an' put it in his mouth. May death have me, ma'am, if the sight didn't parch me tongue ! Every whiff o' him was a blue strame o' fire ; an' ye could see blue blazes dancin' over the pipe ; an' the eyes o' him glared like a cat's in the dark. An' he never moved a limb ; just sat there as unconcerned as ever in his black suit, movin' his lips an' whiffin' out them infernal blue strames.

" ' Ah, great powers ! ' says I ; ' what are ye at all, at all ? Why are ye here ? Why are ye here ? '

" An' with that, for I was frightened powerful, I tumbled off the stool, an' with an odious clatter went crash among the pots an' pot-hooks. An' the next thing I hears is Mary gettin' out o' bed in the room above an' liftin' the latch to come an' see what was up.

"She drew back immediately she seen some one wi' me—by good luck the gentleman had his back to her; an' in a minute or two down she comes in her petticoats—savin' your presence, ladies all—an' wid a shawl round her shoulders. "'What's the matter, John?' says she, kind o' frightened like, an' standin' behind the boy-o, sittin' there like a graven image smokin' away.

"'Nothin',' says I.

"'But I was woke out o' me sleep wi' a shockin' clatter?' says she.

"'Ye were,' says I, 'right enough. I stumbled over the pot there.'

"'You're late?' says she.

"'I am,' says I.

"'What kep' ye,' says she.

"'Aw, nothin' particular,' says I. 'Just made a *kaley* or two. The gentleman there lost his way in the bog, an' he's warmin' himself before he starts out again.'

"All the time we were discoorsin', I was winkin' at Mary to spake to the boy-o; for I thought it powerful *ungenteel* to stand there wi'out addressin' him. At last, she comes round, an' drops a curtsy, an' says she, in a haltin' kind o' way, not a bit like Mary's usual style o' talkin', for, as ye all know, she's blessed wi' the gift o' the gab:

"'Savin' your presence, sir,' says she, 'for appearin' in these duds afore ye; but—I—was loth—to wait—long—for I was a—fraid somethin' bad had ha—happened when I heard—heard——'

"Not another word could she get out; I could see her eyes openin' wide, an' her jaw droppin', an' she fell a-tremblin'. For the boy-o just riz his eyes 'n looked at her; kept them hard on her, an' never moved a muscle, nor spoke a word, nor stopped puffin' blue blazes out o' me ould cutty.

"All of a sudden Mary turns to me, white as a corpse, an' says she: "'God in Heaven! John Graham, who's this? An' what's goin' to happen to us at all?'

"I couldn't answer; an' I thought Mary was goin' into a fit.

"'Look at the mouth o' him,' shouts she, 'blue flames comin' out o' it! An' his nose! An' look at his eyes! Aw, God help us!'—an' she lets a screech; '*look at his feet! Cloots—cloots! It's the devil himself!*' An' with that she tears from the kitchen up into her room an' bolts the door. "I was fair flabbergasted. What could I do? Thinks I, what brings th' ould boy to my fireside? I rubs me head an' looks hard at him; then gets up, an' creepin' to the table empties the lemonade bottle down me throat. "Boys, but poteen's the

darlin' stuff; it put a new heart in me; an' cleared me head; an' made me feel fit to fight twenty divils. "Off I peels me waistcoat; tucks up me shirt sleeves, an' spits on me hands: then up I steps to Mister Divil.

"'Ye ould ragamuffin,' says I, an' whacks me fists in his face, 'what brings ye roamin' like a roarin' lion to decent Prodestan' houses? Did ye ever hear tell o' Red John Graham,' says I, 'that hits man or divil like the kick o' a horse? Look at the face o' him, then,' an' I glares straight at him; 'look at him,' says I, 'ye tarnation ould scarecrow; look an' tremble, Mister Beelzebub! Ye're in the wrong house the night, ye flamin' ould tinker ye!' says I. 'Your kind isn't here, Apollyon. I'm Red John, me boy, that fears neither man nor divil. Let me at your face,' says I—an' from the bedroom comes Mary's voice shoutin': '*Hurroo, John! Pelt the ould vagabond. Pepper him, John.*' 'I will, Mary,' I shouts; 'I will. Come out. Stand up. Give me three minutes at your wizened countenance till I leave ye a laughin' stock for your own angels.'

"Then I made a grab," shouted John, knocking his chair over as he jumped up, and upsetting his tumbler as he made a false clutch at his neighbour's hair. "I made a grab at the head o' him just like that.

"'Come out!' roars I. 'Come out an' be kilt!' An' with the word I fell on me head in the corner over an empty chair."

"Gone?" cried the widow. "He was gone?"

"Ay," answered John; "when I came to there was no one there but Mary, flingin' water over me an' roarin' *meila murther.*"

"Prime," went up the voices. "It's prime. Bully for you, John. Tight boy, John." Then, from halfway down the table, came the voice of a sceptic.

"Well," it said, "in me own experience I've known poteen do *quare* things; but never before this night did I hold it responsible for makin' a man the biggest liar at a wake. Is there no one else? Och, is there no one else? Can no one tell a sober lie for a change?"

John leant over the table towards the sceptic. "Young man," he said, "ye call me a liar, an' ye say I was drunk. Your years, an' the house we're in, 'll excuse ye this time; but never again, mind. An' if you, or any other person here, repeats such things, I'll take ye home an' prove me words by sittin' ye in the very chair th' ould boy sat in: an' I'll give ye the wiggin' I meant for him into the bargain."

FRANK MATHEW

B. 1865

THE REVEREND PETER FLANNERY

MY friend the Reverend Peter Flannery is the sternest-looking and the gentlest of men. To look at him you would fancy he had spent a fierce life; but the truth is that he has lived in a wilderness and that in his broad parish of Moher there is not a mouse afraid of him.

I first met him in an hotel at Lisdoonvarna. One night there was singing, and a big, truculent old priest sang in his turn :

When we went a-gipsying,
A long time ago.

He was very serious and hoarse. With his grim face and white hair he looked the last man in the world to "go a-gipsying." Afterwards I came to know Peter, and spent many evenings with him in the little house where he lives with an old housekeeper of singular ugliness and a turbulent small boy known as Patrick Flannery. I found him absurdly simple, a man knowing nothing of the world and troubling himself little about anything beyond the borders of Moher ; but though he is so unpretending he has deep respect for his dignity as a parish-priest. On one of those evenings in his naked little parlour he told me the story of the only adventure of his life.

A small island with a ruined house on it lies near the shore of the most desolate part of the parish ; at high tide it is ringed with white jumping waves, but at ebb it is set in a black rim of rocks. A miser was strangled there for his money by his daughter, seventy years ago, so the house is known for miles around as the " House of the Murder." Then it was a headland, but afterwards the encroaching sea cut it off from the coast. The Moher folk say the island is haunted by the ghost of an old man with a choked face and with purple foam on his lips, and is given up to the Evil Spirits.

One stormy winter's night, nearly twelve years ago now, Peter Flannery was riding back from visiting a dying woman near Liscannor. It was raining, the wind was dead against him ; he had seldom been out

on such a night though his life-work took him on many a wild lonely ride. As he reached the Liscannor Cross-roads his horse stopped, and a heart-broken voice came from under the trees.

"Remember the Dark Man! For God's sake remember the Dark Man!" He knew that it was Andy Lonergan, the "Dark Man"—that is, the blind man—who haunted that place day and night.

"Is that yourself, Andy?" said he.

"'Tis so, your reverence, but 'tis the black night to be abroad, sure the Banshee is keenin' on th' island."

"The Banshee, is it? I know, I know, and manny's the time I've heard that same, Andy. There's never a rough night without her."

"Is it the wind ye mane, father? I know the wind's cry if anny-one, but 'twasn't only that on th' island to-night; 'twas a woman's voice, sometimes 'twas like a child's. There'll be sore hearts in Moher the morn."

"Ah well, Andy! manny's the queer thing ye've heard in your time," said Peter, and he rode homewards, but Andy's words kept in his head. Now, the blind man was half crazed, yet dared not lie about the Banshee; perhaps there was some poor soul in trouble out on the island. At last he turned his horse; as he rode back past the Cross-roads he called out, "Are ye there, Andy?" but no answer came. The horse seemed to have strong objections to going seaward, and Peter himself had misgivings; he is a Clare man, the son of a Ballyvaughan fisherman, and though of course he does not believe in the Banshee, yet would rather not have gone where there was any chance of meeting her. Then he thought—suppose Andy was fooling him! He could fancy the blind man sitting hidden and grinning at him as he rode back past the Cross-roads. It would be a fine joke in Moher; he flushed at such irreverence.

Then he reached the shore, and dismounting fastened his horse to a wall, and walked down across the slipping shingle, crunching it under foot; he was tripped by tangles of seaweed, and stumbled over a fishing coracle, could see scarcely a yard in front of him. "'Tis a blind man's holiday," he thought. "Faith, Dark Andy could see as much as I can, and why couldn't McCaura leave his coracle in a sensible place?" He went to the water's edge, the foam splashed over him, he could see nothing but the white flashes of breakers and was deafened by the noise. A few minutes of this was enough; he turned back with a smile at the absurdity of his going out there at that time of night. "There's no fool like an old one," he said; then stopped to listen again, and in a

pause (when the wind seemed to be taking breath for a howl) heard a child's cry from the island. How could a baby be on the island in a hurricane, when there was not a soul for miles around would go there for love or money at any time? His misgivings rushed back with uncanny legends of lost souls bound on the winds or imprisoned in the waves that always keep racing towards the land yet always break before reaching it. This might be some Devil's trap. True, he could exorcise the Devil, but would rather not.

He waited during the new howl of the wind—it seemed endless—then in the next pause heard the child's voice again; it was an unmistakably human squall. "'Tis a child, sure enough," he said, "an' a strong one at that." The question for him was not how did the baby get on the island, but how was he to get it off? McCaura's cabin was a mile away across the bog, and on such a night no one would be out except Dark Andy, who would be worse than useless. The only thing was to go out to the island himself, so he groped his way to the coracle.

Now a coracle is a sort of punt, a shallow frame covered with tarpaulin, a ticklish craft, but it can live in the wildest sea, though as Peter said—" 'Tis always on the look-out for a chance to drown ye." He shouldered it as one to the manner born. Many a day and night had he spent afloat in the time when he was a fisher-boy; he thought how often since then he had longed to put out to sea, only his mighty dignity as a parish priest forbade it. His old bones were stiff, but he was as strong as ever.

Well, to cut a long story short, he launched that coracle and reached the island, not without risky and hard work. Dragging the coracle ashore, he made his way to the ruined house; the roof had fallen in, the windows were gone, only the walls were left. He could see nothing, but the child's cry guided him, and then in a corner he found a woman lying huddled on a heap of fallen plaster and laths; her face was to the wall, her left arm clutched a tiny baby. He knelt down by her and touched her forehead—she was dead. By her dress he knew she came from the Arran Islands. Perhaps she had been brought to the "House of the Murder" to keep the birth secret; or perhaps the fishers bringing her to the mainland had been caught by the gale, and could place her in no better shelter in the time of her trouble. Now the Arran folk were familiar to him, many were of his kindred; he must have known this woman from her babyhood, and as a slip of a girl running barefoot on the hills. He turned her face to him, but could only see it dimly; it was much changed too, and half hidden by wet hair. Then the

thought came that he had no right to pry into her secret ; he laid her head back reverently. She lay there with her face to the wall as if she had died in shame.

He took the baby and chafed it, wrapping his woollen comforter round it ; he thought it was dying—his knowledge of babies was small—so he decided to baptize it at once. There was no lack of water, for the rain was still falling in torrents, so he filled a cup that was lying with some untasted food by the mother, and baptized that whining infant as reverently and solemnly as if he had been in a great cathedral.

It must have been a strange scene in the " House of the Murder "—the gaunt old man dripping from the rain and the sea, holding the baby tenderly and awkwardly, with the body of the mother lying beside them. He gave the baby the name Patrick, the first that came to him, "*Pathricius, ego te baptizo,*" and so forth in his queer Latin brogue, and the small new Christian howled dismally, and the gale answering howled outside. Then he unbuttoned the breast of his greatcoat and fastened the baby inside—so that only its ridiculous red face could be seen—and started for home. Crossing more easily this time, he found his old horse huddled in dumb resignation under the lee of the wall, and rode home through the storm at a good pace with a light heart. Every now and then the child cried to show that the life was in it, and then he tried to quiet it tenderly with " Be hushed now, vick machree, son of my heart ! Ah ! be sthille, Pathrick. Be aisy, ye cantankerous little cur ! "

There was great work that night in the little house, when the old priest and his housekeeper welcomed their guest. And when the baby was cosily asleep, Peter got into his big arm-chair and mixed himself a steaming tumbler of punch—for no man values punch more, though of course in strict moderation—and he felt he deserved it to-night. " An' would ye believe it ? " and at this point of his story his voice shook with pathos—" would ye believe it, at th' instant when I was putting it to me lips the clock sthruck twelve, and so I couldn't taste a dhrop, not a single dhrop ! " For if he had tasted it after midnight he could not have said Mass. This was a lame ending to his one adventurous night. The baby was kept in the priest's house, and, when the gale went down, the mother's body was brought from the island and buried ; I think Father Peter found afterwards who she was, though her name never passed his lips.

For nearly twelve years " Pathrick " has ruled the priest's house, thriving under the rough tenderness of Peter Flannery. Meanwhile

Peter has led always the same life, rising in the early morning to say Mass in the cold chapel before a scanty congregation of women ; many of them pray aloud with shut eyes and entire disregard of their neighbours, and Patrick now serves him as clerk, looking very serious in his little white surplice, like a Cupid in a monk's cowl.

Then he rides on his sick-calls, miles and miles away through the bogs and over the hills, for he goes at any hour of the day or night to any one who chooses to summon him ; or he walks down to the school—where he usually finds Patrick standing in the corner with his face to the wall, in disgrace—or he goes his rounds through the Village of Moher. Many a time have I seen him striding down the Village “like an executioner,” and the dirty little ragged children running to meet him and snuggling their smeared faces against his long coat. The first time babies see him they yell as if he was the Devil ; but the next time they would yell louder still if he forgot to fondle them. Many a time have I seen him standing in the street, beleaguered by a cluster of women, scowling nervously over them and looking to see if there is any chance of rescue ; while they all talk at once, quarrelling among themselves :

“ Ah ! Peggy Lonergan, dacint woman, be whisht, can't ye ? ”

“ Mary Ronan, I take shame o' ye to be throublin' the holy priest so. Won't ye be lettin' me have a single word wid him ? ”

And now in the evenings he has something to dream about, and when he sits alone by the fire in his naked parlour, smoking his old pipe—with his tumbler of punch smoking too, to keep him company—he dreams of the great future of Patrick Flannery. He sees that urchin grow up a model, go to Maynooth and win prizes there, rise rapidly in the Church, and even become a Bishop. It is true Pat will have to change greatly before then, for it is a queer Bishop he would make now ; but time works wonders and Pat has a good heart.

Peter hears him preaching the great sermons himself has never preached to the great congregations he has never seen. And he thinks that “ His Lordship Docthor Flannery ” has a pleasing sound, that Bishop Flannery will be loved by all, that blessings will go with him ; it is he that will have an eye for true worth and never let a plain man spend his life in a wilderness while smoother-tongued men have all they want. But at this point the dream breaks, for he knows in his heart that he would be sorry to leave his wilderness ; so when the clock strikes nine he slowly finishes his punch, knocks out the ashes from his pipe and goes up the steep stairs to his bedroom, quavering in his hoarse voice,

When we went a-gipsying,
A long time ago.

A CONNEMARA MIRACLE

FRANK MATHEW

SOME said big John Murnane was the laziest man in Connemara, others called him a surly dog ; but I always liked him. He had some excuse for his laziness and surliness. When I knew him first he was active enough. He used then to begin the day in the brightest of tempers, and if he had been let sit in peace and sunshine would have remained merry, but work undermined his cheerfulness. His farm lay high above Leenane at the head of the Killeries, a creek walled in by mountains, in the heart of the Irish Highlands.

Two roads wind down to the creek, one lower by Finigan's shebeen and one by Murnane's farm. In those days I half envied him ; he had a pretty little wife, a neat home, and three pigs, while I owned neither a pig nor a wife ; he had no vain ambition and asked nothing better than to live and die at home in that wilderness.

But when I visited Connemara again, years later, things had changed with him ; he had met with ill-luck, and had lost heart. A bank holding his little money had failed, his crops had failed too, his last pig had died ; everything had gone badly with him. He spent half his time at the shebeen, and had a dangerous look. To make matters worse, he was to be turned out of his farm—had quarrelled with his landlord ; for a true Galway-man always quarrels with the man best able to thrash him. Murnane was full of fight, his mother used to say of him that he was never at rest except when he was fighting, and of course he knew that some one else must be responsible for his misfortunes, so he laid the blame at his landlord's door.

His landlord was my friend Shane Desmond, who in those days was always at war with his tenants. Here I thought were the makings of a tragedy—a lawless district, an unruly peasantry, and a hated landlord.

Well, that summer my stay in Connemara was brief, and soon after I left, Murnane came to the turning-point of his life. I have the story from his own lips.

In November, when the days grew short and the nights dark, there was a rumour in the shebeens near Leenane that some of "the boys" were coming from Desmond's estate in Clare, a fishing-boat would bring them from Liscannor to the Killeries and take them back without any one being the wiser, and their trip might mend matters.

One boisterous evening, Murnane was standing at his window watching his wife trudging heavily up the mountain road. All day the wind had been hissing drearily through the mountains; now it was snarling and yelping like fighting dogs. There was a veil of rain wavering on the grey crescent of sea.

He had spent hours that day at the shebeen. As he watched his wife he thought in a muddled way how pretty she was when she was young though now she was a plain little woman; he thought of the time when he first caught her in his arms, down yonder where the Owen-Erriff runs by the Devil's Mother Mountain—"I love ye, Molly Joyce! tell me now, are ye listenin' to me, mavourneen dheelish! I love ye!"—then of their life, of the careless years, of his losses and troubles, of the heavy evenings he spent smoking by the dull light of the turf fire alone with her in this cabin, then of the loud nights in the shebeen, and of the dreary times at home after. She seemed to get so silent and dull, he was tired of her worried face, sick of her frightened way of watching him.

Though he knew that she was a kind little woman, and that she loved him like a dog, he had grown hard and cold with her. Only that evening he had told her roughly to stop making a hare of herself, moping and poking about doing nothing, and to get out of that and to spend the night at her father's; and she, knowing the little use of speaking to him, had gone silently. He felt half sorry for his roughness as he watched her; after all she was a good soul and they had been happy together once. But now that he was to lose his last belongings why should he keep her? how could he when he couldn't? She must go back to her own folk who were well-to-do—for those parts—while he went out to try his luck in the world.

Then he walked up and down his cabin. It looked wretched; the turf fire on the hearth had smouldered, the whitewashed walls were blackened by smoke, they had little on them but a big crucifix, there was little furniture left. He remembered it bright and homelike; now it would be unroofed, he would be penniless and homeless unless Desmond was shot that night.

For the boat had come from Liscannor, and when Desmond drove back from Carrala, "the boys" were to wait for him on the lower road. If he came by the upper road, Murnane would see him, and was to put a light in his window; then they would change their ambush.

At the best, Murnane's thoughts were not clear. Now he kept thinking, over and over again, sure 'twas no harm lighting a candle, 'twas no business of his whatever the boys below might do; then, 'twas his chance of revenge, sure the man deserved to be killed; then, if only he was going to hit Desmond himself 'twould be different, but 'twas cowardly just lighting a candle; then, 'twas a black job after all.

Outside the twilight was fading; the wind was working itself into a rage with uncanny cries. Was that the wind or the shriek of the Banshee? It was said that lost souls were chained on the wind, surely there were human cries in it now: why were the dead abroad to-night?

The landscape was blotted out. Then the moon began to rise and the backs of the mountains rose out of the darkness. Then he saw their steep walls and the winding lane of slaty water between them.

There was a glimmer of silver over Muilrea; the moon floated into sight with milky-edged clouds round her; a path of light crossed the water, and three streams glittered on the Blue Gable Mountain. The moon seemed to shine out with strange suddenness; the jagged top of Muilrea stood black against her, making her look as if a ragged piece had been torn from her. He stared till the light dazzled him; then turned away.

The black crucifix on the wall opposite was shown plainly by the moonlight; the face of its figure was bent forward as if watching him. He had prayed before it so often all his life. It had seen him a baby in the cradle, a child dandled by his mother, a man bringing home his bride. Here in this cabin, this one room where his life had been centred, the crucifix hung as a silent witness. He thought of his misery; sure he had cause to hate the man. Still that sad face was watching him, he could not bear it, must take the crucifix down. Placing a bench under, he reached to the nail fastening the top and wrenched it out.

The moon was covered. The cross leant forward in the darkness. He turned his head away to shun the bent face; and groping, tugged out the nail at the foot. The cross seemed as heavy as lead, he dared

not look at it ; placing it in the corner—face downward—he covered it with a cloth.

Then he stood again at the window. The moon shone out, and the wind lurched drunkenly against the door, with an echo of singing from the shebeen, the chorus of " Crúiscin Lan " (The Little Full Jug) :

Is gradh mo croidhe a cuilin ban ban ban,
Is gradh mo croidhe a cuilin ban.

He could fancy the crowded smoky room, the glowing turf fire, and old Pat Finigan singing with a jolly flushed face ; and those other men listening too, crouching behind the low wall.

There was a stain of rust on his right hand and he thought it was blood, rubbed it but it was dry, felt as if a curse had fallen on him. Then came a pause between the gusts, and he heard the ring of hoofs on the stony road. At once he turned back to light the candle, took it with a shaky hand : then on the wall where the cross had been, saw a dazzling white cross.

He staggered back with his eyes fixed on it : it was a miracle, a last warning. He dashed the candle on the ground, and crunched it under foot into the earthen floor.

The moon was drowned by the clouds and left the cabin pitch dark. The wind crashed against the door again. He unlatched the door, it was dashed open—he could not breathe—tried to pull it to after him but could not, some unseen hand seemed dragging it. The wind swirled through the cabin and flung the cloth from the prostrate crucifix.

The next morning was calm, with a stainless sky. Molly came trudging down the mountain road from her father's farm, her heart heavy with foreboding. All that night she had been crying and praying. The glory of the morning, the rare colouring of the mountains, the green crescent of sea, were nothing to her.

As she reached the door of the cabin she saw her man sitting by the hearth with his head bent forward on his hands. The crucifix was gone from its place. It had been fixed there when the walls had been shining with fresh whitewash, now they were blackened, but where it had hung the wall remained white in the shape of a cross.

" Is it you, asthore ? " he said, came to meet her, put his hands on her shoulders, and drew her close to him.

" It's a hard world 'tis, mavourneen, but we'll bear God's will together, Molly dear."

W. B. YEATS

B. 1865

THE TWISTING OF THE ROPE

HANRAHAN was walking the roads one time near Kinvara at the fall of day, and he heard the sound of a fiddle from a house a little way off the roadside. He turned up the path to it, for he never had the habit of passing by any place where there was music or dancing or good company, without going in. The man of the house was standing at the door, and when Hanrahan came near he knew him and he said: "A welcome before you, Hanrahan, you have been lost to us this long time." But the woman of the house came to the door and she said to her husband: "I would be as well pleased for Hanrahan not to come in to-night, for he has no good name now among the priests, or with women that mind themselves, and I wouldn't wonder from his walk if he has a drop of drink taken." But the man said, "I will never turn away Hanrahan of the poets from my door," and with that he bade him enter.

There were a good many neighbours gathered in the house, and some of them remembered Hanrahan; but some of the little lads that were in the corners had only heard of him, and they stood up to have a view of him, and one of them said: "Is not that Hanrahan that had the school, and that was brought away by Them?" But his mother put her hand over his mouth and bade him be quiet, and not be saying things like that. "For Hanrahan is apt to grow wicked," she said, "if he hears talk of that story, or if any one goes questioning him." One or another called out then, asking him for a song, but the man of the house said it was no time to ask him for a song, before he had rested himself; and he gave him whiskey in a glass, and Hanrahan thanked him and wished him good health and drank it off.

The fiddler was tuning his fiddle for another dance, and the man of the house said to the young men, they would all know what dancing was like when they saw Hanrahan dance, for the like of it had never been seen since he was there before. Hanrahan said he would not dance, he had better use for his feet now, travelling as he was through the five provinces of Ireland. Just as he said that, there came in at the half-door Oona, the daughter of the house, having a few bits of bog deal from Connemara in her arms for the fire. She threw them

on the hearth and the flame rose up, and showed her to be very comely and smiling, and two or three of the young men rose up and asked for a dance. But Hanrahan crossed the floor and brushed the others away, and said it was with him she must dance, after the long road he had travelled before he came to her. And it is likely he said some soft word in her ear, for she said nothing against it, and stood out with him, and there were little blushes in her cheeks. Then other couples stood up, but when the dance was going to begin, Hanrahan chanced to look down, and he took notice of his boots that were worn and broken, and the ragged grey socks showing through them ; and he said angrily it was a bad floor, and the music no great things, and he sat down in the dark place beside the hearth. But if he did, the girl sat down there with him.

The dancing went on, and when that dance was over another was called for, and no one took much notice of Oona and Red Hanrahan for a while, in the corner where they were. But the mother grew to be uneasy, and she called to Oona to come and help her to set the table in the inner room. But Oona, that had never refused her before, said she would come soon, but not yet, for she was listening to whatever he was saying in her ear. The mother grew yet more uneasy then, and she would come nearer them, and let on to be stirring the fire or sweeping the hearth, and she would listen for a minute to hear what the poet was saying to her child. And one time she heard him telling about white-handed Deirdre, and how she brought the sons of Usnach to their death ; and how the blush in her cheeks was not so red as the blood of kings' sons that was shed for her, and her sorrows had never gone out of mind ; and he said it was maybe the memory of her that made the cry of the plover on the bog as sorrowful in the ear of the poets as the keening of young men for a comrade. And there would never have been that memory of her, he said, if it was not for the poets that had put her beauty in their songs. And the next time she did not well understand what he was saying, but as far as she could hear it had the sound of poetry though it was not rhymed, and this is what she heard him say : " The sun and the moon are the man and the girl, they are my life and your life, they are travelling and ever travelling through the skies as if under the one hood. It was God made them for one another. He made your life and my life before the beginning of the world, he made them that they might go through the world, up and down, like the two best dancers that go on with the dance up

and down the long floor of the bairn, fresh and laughing, when all the rest are tired out and leaning against the wall."

The old woman went then to where her husband was playing cards, but he would take no notice of her, and then she went to a woman of the neighbours and said: "Is there no way we can get them from one another?" and without waiting for an answer she said to some young men that were talking together: "What good are you when you cannot make the best girl in the house come out and dance with you? And go now the whole of you," she said, "and see can you bring her away from the poet's talk." But Oona would not listen to any of them, but only moved her hand as if to send them away. Then they called to Hanrahan and said he had best dance with the girl himself, or let her dance with one of them. When Hanrahan heard what they were saying he said: "That is so, I will dance with her; there is no man in the house must dance with her but myself."

He stood up with her then, and led her out by the hand, and some of the young men were vexed, and some began mocking at his ragged coat and his broken boots. But he took no notice, and Oona took no notice, but they looked at one another as if all the world belonged to themselves alone. But another couple that had been sitting together like lovers stood out on the floor at the same time, holding one another's hands and moving their feet to keep time with the music. But Hanrahan turned his back on them as if angry, and in place of dancing he began to sing, and as he sang he held her hand, and his voice grew louder, and the mocking of the young men stopped, and the fiddle stopped, and there was nothing heard but his voice that had in it the sound of the wind. And what he sang was a song he had heard or had made one time in his wanderings on Slieve Echtge, and the words of it as they can be put into English were like this:

O Death's old bony finger
Will never find us there
In the high hollow townland
Where love's to give and to spare;
Where boughs have fruit and blossom
At all times of the year;
Where rivers are running over
With red beer and brown beer.
An old man plays the bagpipes
In a gold and silver wood;
Queens, their eyes blue like the ice,
Are dancing in a crowd.

And while he was singing it Oona moved nearer to him, and the colour had gone from her cheek, and her eyes were not blue now, but grey with the tears that were in them, and any one that saw her would have thought she was ready to follow him there and then from the west to the east of the world.

But one of the young men called out : " Where is that country he is singing about ? Mind yourself, Oona, it is a long way off, you might be a long time on the road before you would reach to it." And another said : " It is not to the Country of the Young you will be going if you go with him, but to Mayo of the bogs." Oona looked at him then as if she would question him, but he raised her head in his hand, and called out between singing and shouting : " It is very near us that country is, it is on every side ; it may be on the bare hill behind it is, or it may be in the heart of the wood." And he said out very loud and clear : " In the heart of the wood ; oh, death will never find us in the heart of the wood. And will you come with me there, Oona ? " he said.

But while he was saying this the two old women had gone outside the door, and Oona's mother was crying, and she said : " He has put an enchantment on Oona. Can we not get the men to put him out of the house ? "

" That is a thing you cannot do," said the other woman, " for he is a poet of the Gael, and you know well if you would put a poet of the Gael out of the house, he would put a curse on you that would wither the corn in the fields and dry up the milk of the cows, if it had to hang in the air seven years."

" God help us," said the mother, " and why did I ever let him into the house at all, and the wild name he has ! "

" It would have been no harm at all to have kept him outside, but there would great harm come upon you if you put him out by force. But listen to the plan I have to get him out of the house by his own doing, without any one putting him from it at all."

It was not long after that the two women came in again, each of them having a bundle of hay in her apron. Hanrahan was not singing now, but he was talking to Oona very fast and soft, and he was saying : " The house is narrow but the world is wide, and there is no true lover that need be afraid of night or morning or sun or stars or shadows of evening, or any earthly thing." " Hanrahan," said the mother then, striking him on the shoulder, " will you give me a hand here for a

minute ? " " Do that, Hanrahan," said the woman of the neighbours, " and help us to make this hay into a rope, for you are ready with your hands, and a blast of wind has loosened the thatch on the haystack."

" I will do that for you," said he, and he took the little stick in his hands, and the mother began giving out the hay, and he twisting it, but he was hurrying to have done with it, and to be free again. The women went on talking and giving out the hay, and encouraging him, and saying what a good twister of a rope he was, better than their own neighbours or than any one they had ever seen. And Hanrahan saw that Oona was watching him, and he began to twist very quick and with his head high, and to boast of the readiness of his hands, and the learning he had in his head, and the strength in his arms. And as he was boasting, he went backward, twisting the rope always till he came to the door that was open behind him, and without thinking he passed the threshold and was out on the road. And no sooner was he there than the mother made a sudden rush, and threw out the rope after him, and she shut the door and the half-door and put a bolt upon them.

She was well pleased when she had done that, and laughed out loud, and the neighbours laughed and praised her. But they heard him beating at the door, and saying words of cursing outside it, and the mother had but time to stop Oona that had her hand upon the bolt to open it. She made a sign to the fiddler then, and he began a reel, and one of the young men asked no leave but caught hold of Oona and brought her into the thick of the dance. And when it was over and the fiddle had stopped, there was no sound at all of anything outside, but the road was as quiet as before.

As to Hanrahan, when he knew he was shut out and that there was neither shelter nor drink nor a girl's ear for him that night, the anger and the courage went out of him, and he went on to where the waves were beating on the strand.

He sat down on a big stone, and he began swinging his right arm and singing slowly to himself, the way he did always to hearten himself when every other thing failed him. And whether it was that time or another time he made the song that is called to this day " The Twisting of the Rope," and that begins, " What was the dead cat that put me in this place," is not known.

But after he had been singing a while, mist and shadows seemed to gather about him, sometimes coming out of the sea, and sometimes

moving upon it. It seemed to him that one of the shadows was the queen-woman he had seen in her sleep at Slieve Echtge ; not in her sleep now, but mocking, and calling out to them that were behind her : " He was weak, he was weak, he had no courage." And he felt the strands of the rope in his hand yet, and went on twisting it, but it seemed to him as he twisted that it had all the sorrows of the world in it. And then it seemed to him as if the rope had changed in his dream into a great water-worm that came out of the sea, and that twisted itself about him, and held him closer and closer, and grew from big to bigger till the whole of the earth and skies were wound up in it, and the stars themselves were but the shining of the ridges of its skin. And then he got free of it, and went on, shaking and unsteady, along the edge of the strand, and the grey shapes were flying here and there around him. And this is what they were saying, " It is a pity for him that refuses the call of the daughters of the Sidhe, for he will find no comfort in the love of the women of the earth to the end of life and time, and the cold of the grave is in his heart for ever. It is death he has chosen ; let him die, let him die, let him die."

AGNES CASTLE

ROSANNA

SITTING by the fire we were, smoking our bits of pipes, just him and me together, when, of a sudden, he turns on me an' he says: "Da," he says, "it's about time I was thinking of taking a wife," says he.

"An' is that the way wid ye?" I says. "Troth, an' I'm thinking as much meself this long time. Sure it's scandalising discomfiture we're living in," I says, "ever since poor auld Maria went and died on us,—the Lord be merciful to her soul! Your poor mother,—the Lord be merciful to her!—she'd be like to tear the eyes out of them sluts of girls this minute,—the blessed saint in Heaven, that she is! Thru for ye, me boy, it's a wife we want, and who'd be the wan to look out but yourself, since it's the auld fellow I'm getting, entirely. And who'll it be?" says I, that innocent, niver suspecting he'd be so undutiful as to be making his choice unbeknownst to me—let alone that same grand choice! "Who'll be it?" I axes him. "What would ye say to Miss Condren at the Cross Roads? It's thru she's a long nose of her own; but what's that? She's the rale auld family."

"What 'ud I say to Miss Condren?" cries he. "It's making game o' me ye are, I think. What 'ud I say to Judy Condren?" says he, grinning at me wid all his white teeth an' thim clinched over his pipe. "Sure, if I saw that long nose of hers poking about here—'Take your snipe's beak out of this house,' that's what I'd say to her."

"Then it's one of them thriftless Roches ye've got in your mind," says I; "not but what auld Roche is a dacent feller, an' the girls has fine figures of their own, I'm not denying. But it's not much fortune they'd be bringing a boy."

"Is it I," he cried, "'d take up wid one of them? Bedad, I'm surprised at ye for mintioning them at all! What would I be doing with such flithereens, streeling about wid their ribbins an' their feathers an' the impident airs of them?"

"Then it'll be Mary Cassidy, I'll be bound," says I.

"No such thing," says he; "she's been walking wid Jim Nolan this month past."

"Will it be Miss O'Donnell?" says I.

"It will not," says he; "I'd rather go single all me days."

"Well, in the name of God," says I, "who is it to be, thin? May be it's a town-girl ye're set on after all. There's Miss Hinnegan at the hotel,—it's not the family connection I'd choose for ye, Johnny, the O'Moores have never wedded wid trade yet—but they do be sayin' it's rolling in gold she'll be when auld Hinnegan dies. She'll not say no to ye, Johnny. Troth, and I was noticing them were quare looks she was giving ye last Saturday after the pig-fair."

"An' what sort of looks would ye have her give anny wan wid them crass eyes of hers," says me young man, an' he takes his pipe out of his mouth an' bursts out laughing. "Sure, God help her, she can't look one way widout lookin' the other. She'd be the right sort to put things straight for us."

At that I bid him lave off his moidering thricks, for I knew it was humbugging me, he was, an' not a bit of marrying on him. An' he never answered me back a word, but was spacheless, playing a chune on the stem of his pipe wid his fingers, an' puffing at it, an' it black out. An' thin he says: "It's not money we want wid a wife; ye're a warm man, father—an' it's not beholden to a slip of a girl we'd be—you an' me."

"It's aisy talking that-a-way," says I, "but it 'ud be no use at all, at all, for a fine young feller like yourself to go taking up wid a body that hadn't enough to keep herself. It 'ud not be respectable," says I, "not what your father's son was rared up to."

"An' as for family," says he, kind of dreamy, as if he had not heard me, "isn't it the rale auld stock we are ourselves? O'Moores of Moorestown, discindints of Rory O'Moore,—king's blood," says he, "an' whàt's Roches, an' Condrens, an' O'Donnells to that? It's no sort of use to try and ally ourselves wid thim as 'll match us," says he; "an' why? Because they're not to be found—that's why. We'll mate to plaze ourselves," he says, as bould as brass; "an' what we want is a little young crathur wid a heart full of love; a little weeshy, dawshy, coaxing bit of a thing wid eyes the colour of violets, that would swally ye'r heart alive and niver let it out again; an' a head full of curls that would drive a boy wild just to look at!"

"What sort of blasphemious talk is that out of ye?" cries I, interrupting him. "It's meself ye'll have wild in a minute or two," for I didn't fancy the looks of him, wid his head on one side an' a kind of silly smile on him. "What in the whole wide worrld's upon ye?"

says I. "Spake out, man, or I'll drag the tongue out of yer jaws an' make you tell the thrut that-a-way."

He turns upon me wid his hands on his knees, an' his face the colour of the peonies in the garden beyant. "Da," he says, an' rasps his throat; "Father," he says an' thin out he bursts. "You've no right," he says, "to be casting up at her thim rogues and vagabonds of parints of hers! Shure her mother isn't her mother at all, on'y her stepmother; 'an as for her father—bad scan to him—he's the greatest bla'guard between this and Dublin. However, it's not fair," says he, "to be goin' on this way, for sure it's niver themselves they are, at all, but blind drunk every day of the week, an' Sundays into the bargain. But as for herself, it's the purty little crathur she is, like an angel from heaven, her that's niver seen nothing but hell's wickedness since the day she was born. She doesn't rightly know how to set about anything yit, an' if she is a Protestant it's on'y because she know no betther. She learnt no wickedness off anny of thim, an' troth it's a Catholic she'll be the minute she's told how."

"Tare an' ages," says I, "ye murthering villain, hold yer tongue! Hold yer tongue, you spawn of hell, an' tell me the name of her widout another word!"

He was white now from red he was before, but his impidence was beyond everything. "It's Rosanna Moriarty," he says.

Well, I let a screech—I have a quick kind of temper, not a bad one, mind ye, but hasty-like. My poor mother—God be merciful to her!—manny's the time she'd tell us of the day I nearly murdered her wid the pitaty knife, an' I but seven years of age; an' the day I had me little sishter—God be merciful to her, that's poor auld Maria, I mean—strangled wid her apron-strings for letting me little pet rabbits run away. Blue in the face she was, an' I pulling at the strings as hard as I could! We used to be kilt wid the laughing, talking of it. But I was always the rale good Catholic, an' sure me blood was up entirely. I was like to kill him dead that minute, break his head open on him, an' small blame to me. But I controlled meself. Wid a moighty effort I kep' calm. "Johnny O'Moore," I says, "ye black, onfilial, heathen scrawn of a bla'guard scamp, mintion that name in my hearing again an' I'll have yer life, as sure as you stand there."

Wid that he says no more, an' I says no more, nor was the subject as much as remarked upon between us till the next time he had impidence enough to dare, an' that was the very week after.

What did that owdacious rogue of a Moriarty go for to do, but die on us all of a sudden in the Delirious Trimmings, as the Docthur called it—a real roaring fit of drunkenness—an' his limb of a wife, she takes to her heels an' off wid her out of the place, sorra a one knew where, an' the little schemer of a Rosanna left behind on our hands together wid the corpse an' a power of debts.

It was auld Jim Roche first gave us the news; an' says he: "It's rale bad Rosanna is, the crathur! Sure they can't get her away from the poor fella' at all, an' neither bite nor sup has crossed her lips this blessed day. It 'ud break your heart to see her, with them purty red curls of hers hanging every way, and them big black eyes of hers swollen up wid the crying. An' him the bitther bad father!"

An' then I see me fine young man start up from his corner an' off wid him widout a word.

Sure I knew the way it 'ud be. Some one would be offering to take in the girl out of charity, an' me fella' would have to be keeping up them sperrits of hers an' consoling of her an' wiping away all them tears—him as cute as a pet fox from the day he was weaned! But there's two on us can be cute, thinks I, an' out of the place she goes, or my name's not Larry O'Moore. There's the workhouse for her, an' the likes of her, beyant in the town. She'll be fed, an' warmed, an' clothed dacent there than ever she's been in her life, an' my money helping to do it into the bargain. But I'll not have her left here to be bringing disgrace into my family. So I just says a word to Jim Roche, an' then I took a bit of a stroll, an' wint here and there, an' dropt into this wan an' that, an' be jabbers I gave them all the hint. There isn't wan but 'ud be afeard to fall out wid me for they, most of them, owes me a bit an' I've been a good friend to them in the bad times. An', to tell the thrut, I'm plisanter as a friend than as an enemy.

Av course not a boy of them let on he understood what I was dhriving at: they wouldn't be that onpolite, an' I wouldn't have misdemeaned meself by speaking too plain. But, lonnies, it's aisy to say a good deal when you're saying nothin' at all, and when I came home, sure, I knew I had settled the young gentleman's nonsense for him, for as grand as he thought himself.

The auld cuckoo-clock had gone twelve (an' it's twenty minutes late regular) before Johnny came back that night. A rale warm spring night it was, black and moist, an' all his curls were plastered down his cheeks wid the way he'd been stravaquing round.

I was sitting waiting for him, smoking me pipe wid a peaceful soul, for it was a good stroke of work I had done the day, an' so I kep' telling meself, when in he bursts like a wild fella.

"Father," says he, "I've tauld ye I wanted to marry Rosanna Moriarty; an' I mean to marry her," he says.

"Och, listen to him," says I, scornful; "sure it's wandering in his speech, he is!"

"Father," he says, rale earnest and eager, "I've always been a good son to you. I've never been drunk nor contradictory, an' when other young men would have gone off an' seen the world, I've kep' at home an' worked an' helped you. In the name of God," says he, pitiful-like, "do not drive me to be undutiful now! Oh, father, it is a poor little innocent thing she is, an' it's alone and desolate she is, an' by Heaven," he cries, "this is a hard cruel worrld! There's not one of them 'll give her a shelter or a crust this blessed night; an' on'y for auld Kitty who's sittin' and wakin' the corpse, the poor crathur 'ud be alone wid the dead this minute—enough to drive her distracted entirely! But give your consent to our wedding," he cries, "an' then it's who'll have her, I'll be bound. The cauld-hearted scoundrels as could shut their doors on her that way—why, it's fighting for her they'll be then! But I'll be even wid them yet, the whole lot of them, whatever black curse of cruelty has come over them, at all, at all."

I was puffing away at my pipe, an' for the life of me I could not but give an agreeable smile to meself, thinking it was the rale proper kind of respect I was held in all over the place; not but that I knew there was not one of them as 'ud dare to go agin me.

When he sees me smile, he stops suddent and gives me a quare look. "Father," says he, "I see what you have been after. God forgive you," he says, "but it's a wicked man you are."

"Whisht, now, don't be goin' on," says I; "you will live to thank me yet."

"An' what is to become of that poor young crathur?" says he, quite quiet; "have ye thought of that? She cannot live alone in that auld tumble-down place, an' her that purty an' little, an' black Mac (divel take him!) wid his eye on her this many a day. What is to become of her, father?"

"Let her go to the workhouse," says I; "she need not fear black Mac there, for they keep them away from each other fast enough, the

young boys an' the young girls too. They will be coming, no doubt, to bury the father from the Union to-morrow; let them take the daughter too; it's the right place for her."

Wid that, he lets the awfulest oath ever ye heard. "She'll not go there," he says, "so long as I'm alive."

"May I ax what you intend to do, then?" says I, very polite.

"I have tauld you already," says he; "I intend to marry her."

"An' may I inquire what yez are going to live on then? For I warn ye fair," says I, in a white rage—for I seen by the obstinate look of him that he was set on his wickedness—"I warn ye," says I, "that across this thrashle ye will niver step once ye take up wid that Protestant slut of Moriarty's; nor a penny of me money ye will never see, neither now nor when I am gone."

"Is that your last word?" says he, an' stands up.

"It's me last word," says I, "as I'm a living man."

"Then, good-bye, father," says he.

"Good-bye," says I, "an' me curse upon you," says I. "My father's curse on the two of yez!"

Well, out he stamps widout as much as another word, an' I sits by the fire thinking it's home again he'll be before I can turn round. Sure an' I never thought he'd have thrown me over that-a-way, an' him an' me always together from the time he was a babby. But the turf itself burnt white under my eyes, an' the dawn broke that cauld an' desolate imto the room, but sorra a bit of him come back to me. An' for three days I heard no news of him, an' sure I was that dark an' down in meself not wan dared to speak to me. The fellers was afraid to tell me the thrut, an' to be plain wid ye, I was not, so to say, encouraging to conversation. Bedad, I would not let them think I cared a halfpenny what that scoundrel of a boy was up to, when he chose to go against his father that rate.

He niver came home to me, an' I axed no questions of nobody. But on the Thursday it was, Mrs. Malony (his Rivirence's housekeeper, a contrary fidget of an auld woman she is) stops me just as I was passing the door. "Oh, Mr. O'Moore," she cries, in that mincing way of hers, "what is this I hear about Johnny?" she says. "Father O'Hara will be fit to be tied," she says, "when he comes back from visiting His Holiness at Rome."

"What may ye have heard, ma'am?" says I. "For it's little I know or want to know about him."

" Oh," she says, throwing up her eyes like an auld hen in a fit, " oh, Mr. O'Moore, sir, do not ax me ; I couldn't defile my tongue by speaking of it."

" Well, an' that happens to come right," says I, " for I don't want to hear. Though if you can reconcile it to your conscience to be keeping the thrut from his own father, it is surprised at ye I am, Mrs. Malony, an' that's all I have got to say."

Sure, it was just itching the auld girl was to tell me the bad news. " Is it possible you don't know, Mr. O'Moore ? " she says. " Oh dear, how can I bring meself to discourse of such a scandal ! It is the real saint we all thought Mr. Johnny, an' him so good in the choir, an' so regular at the Stations. Och, the shame of it ! " she says. " Father O'Hara will be leppin' mad, he will ! But there's little shame about either of them," she says, " going about that brazen, an' buying things together—set up house they have as bold as man an' wife—the like was niver seen hereabouts before. Set up house in that ruinacious auld cabin of Moriarty's, an' him not a week dead yet. And she, the dirthy Protestant. Now if she'd been a Catholic itself—Och, it's a terrible visitation to the place, an' the remarks of the folks, an' the illusions, an' the jokes,—it's shocking altogether ! Could not ye speak to your son, now ? "

" Mrs. Malony," says I, an' I niver turned a hair, " he is no longer anny son of mine, an' I will thank ye to remember it. I have cast him off," I says ; " he is no O'Moore, at all, at all, to be bringing disgrace upon the name of them that has been kings in the land. An' as for that other," says I, " I'm wondering how ye have the face to mintion her to me ! " Wid that I made her an iligant bow an' left her.

Well, that was the cruel, hard time for me. And, as if they'd given each other the word, sure every one in the place had something to say to me about them, wonst it was out that I knew their goings on. This boy told me wan thing, an' that boy would tell another, till it is distracted I was. An' sure did not one up to me an' says he : " Ye'd better let them be married off at wonst," says he, " an' save the shame of it." I struck him prostrate for that same, for as auld as I am. " I will let them go to hell together," says I.

If only Father O'Hara had been back home, but it's visiting His Holiness in Rome he was, an' not expexted for another week.

Sunday was the rale disgraceful day. On my entry into the chapel, before I could as much as kneel down, I hears a kind of stir in the place

behind me, an' I sees all them rows of Roche girls nudging each other and tossing their heads. An' there was a kind of titter among the boys, an' auld Biddy Flannagan, the crathur, who always kneels in the middle just before the rails, where she can have a good view of his Rivirence an' plenty of room to be rocking herself about, looks over her shoulder, an' snorts like an auld say-pig, an' rolls her eyes that wild-like I thought she was struck wid an apple-complex. An' then what should I see but my young gentleman marching up the chapel, an' Miss Moriarty, if ye plaze, alongside of him in a bran new black gown, an' a white sun-bonnet—he looking neither to right nor left, an' she watching him with them saucer eyes, that had done all the mischief. An' when he salutes the altar, she gives a little dip beside him, the heathen! He kneels down at the end of the bench an' she inside. An' in a minute or two out comes little Father Jo, the curate from town beyant, who says Mass of a Sunday when Father O'Hara is away; an' glad I was to see him, for the cheeks was burning off of me. When he done the Gospel, an' he had off wid his vestment, an' come to the altar-steps to read out the notices an' every one was quiet listening to what he was going to say, if the first things he lets out is not the banns of marriage between John O'Connell O'Moore of Moorestown in this parish an' Rosanna Moriarty of Mount Pleasant in the same! Begorrah, the whole place was swimming round wid me. Spacheless I was, an' all I could do was just to look at them, thinking it 'ud be a wonder if the auld flags would not open and swalley them up.

Himself was sitting like a lamb, niver stirring hand nor foot, his eyes fixed rale pious on the alther, as if butther would not melt in his mouth. An' she, wid her sun-bonnet tumbled off them red curls of hers, as rosy over the impident face of her as ye plaze, wid a kind of dimple coming an' going on one side of her cheek that was just bursting wid smiles as anny one could see. At the sight of them I don't know what came over me, bit I gives a kind of bawl, and ups on me feet. "Your Rivirence," says I, "I forbid them banns."

An' Father Jo, who was rambling on quite aisy, stops as if he had been shot. "What's that?" says he, very sharp—you could have heard a pin drop. But my blood was up, an' the whole place looking at me. "I forbid them banns," I says; "an' if your Rivirence wants to know about the impediment, sure there she is, an' sorra a bit of spiritual relation either, but a real Orange heretic, an' not a

bit of shame on her, the dirty steeple, shamming prayer beside the poor boy she has deluded entirely—an' her breaking all the Commandments this minute. She'll not wed him, I'll have her know it."

"This is very onseemly," says Father Jo, as pink as a babby to the roots of his hair; "I cannot have this disturbance in the chapel," he says.

"But your Rivirence," says I, "didn't ye give it out this minute? 'If any one is aware,' says you, and sure——"

"Whisht!" says he; "this is scandalising behaviour."

"An' it is that same, yer Rivirence," says I, "but that's no fault of mine."

"Sit down," says he; "I'll see ye after Mass in the vestry."

An' Johnny niver a word out of him, but sitting there like a statue. I sees her cradle up to him like a child, an' now an' agin she shoots a look at me out of her eyes that was swalleying up her face—too big was they entirely. And what wid one thing an' another, I felt that mad, that it's not a prayer I said that day.

Well, I gives Father Jo a bit o' me mind in the vestry; but not a ha'-porth of good could I get out of him. "Ye must speak to Father O'Hara," says he, "for I cannot interfere."

An' when I got out of the chapel, och, to hear them all talking! "What's the meaning of her coming to chapel wid him, and her a Protestant?" says one. "Why it's converting her he is," says another, and wid that they were all fit to die wid laughing. An' didn't that scrawn of hell, black Mac, catch up the pair of them on the road, an' out with some of his impidence, an' did not Johnny an' he have the grandest set-to that ever was seen in these parts, an' did not Johnny give him such a pair of black eyes that the folks do be talking about it still? The finest shindy ever they saw, they tell me: but sure, I could not be taking pleasure out of anything wid the shame of the world upon me.

Well, on Tuesday evening, as I was sitting down to me bit of a supper, on the stroke of ten o'clock, who should come tearing in upon me but Father O'Hara himself. It is the holy show he was with the grime an' the smuts of the railway on the pale face of him, an' his long white hair hanging wild-like over his eyes. "What is this I hear," he says, widout as much as reaching me his hand, "what is this I hear about Johnny?" I was right glad to tell him the story, but when I had finished I thought he was going to murder

me entirely. Rale wicked, he was, an' I as innercent as the babe unborn.

"You onnatural man," says he, "an' can ye sit there and tell me in cold blood that you have drove these unfort'nit children into sin? Och, God help'us all," he cries, "that I should have come home to this! I have been among yez forty years come Christmas an' I have had the grief of the world over yez all, God knows," he says, "An' manny an' manny a time I have seen yez break our Divine Master's holy commandments; manny a time, my poor flock, I have had to weep over yez and for yez. I have seen yez fighting, an' injuring, an' cheating each other, an' seen yez in jail an' in throuble, an' known in me sorrowful soul that the sentence of the law was just. When we had that terrible murther here," he went on, "'tis fifteen year ago now, on'y for the grace of God an' His powerful consolation an' the sight of the poor sinner's beautiful pinitence, sure I must have died of the agony in me heart, for it is the heart of a father I have to yez all. But niver," he says, "niver before in all the days I have been among yez have anny of my children fell into such sin as this. An' to think it should be the child of me predelection, little Johnny," he cries, his voice breaking wid the sorrow, "him that was my pride an' my joy, him that your sainted wife, Laurence O'Moore, laid in me arms wid her last dying effort! Oh, man," he goes on, turning on me again, "I hold you responsible before the throne of God for all the guilt that lies on the souls of that poor boy an' girl to-night."

An' not bit of reason wud' he hear from me. Priests an' women is that-a-way where the young folks is concerned: they do be forgetting the Fourth Commandment altogether. I could not pacify him at all, at all. "Come wid me," he says, "come this minute, an' let us seek these childer. Not another night will I consent to let them stray without the Fold. Come, Laurence," he says, "in the name of your God, I command you; come and repair in so far as His mercy will permit the cruel wrong you have done!"

Nothing would serve him but I must set out wid him into the night beyant that very instant. An' on'y that I was afeared for his sake, on account of the state he was in, an' him such an auld man an' so frail, sure I had niver have demeaned meself by going a step.

But out he runs me, an' down the lane, an' across the village—thanks to goodness there was none about—an' up the bit of bog to the shanty, where Johnny had set up wid his light-of-love. The moon

burst out of the clouds ; there was a soft wind blowing round us, an' his Rivirence's face shone as pale as death wid all the white locks round it, an' him skimming along like a hare, so that I was hard set to keep up wid him. Well, we soon come in sight of Mount Pleasant. There it stood in the moonlight, wid the thatch falling off the roof, an' the mud of the walls crumbling away, the miserablest, most God-forsaken hole of a place I ever see. An' as I thought of my on'y son disgracing himself by coming down to such a residence, I could not help it, but I let a curse on the pair of them.

His Rivirence whisks round an' lifts his hand, an' then he clutches me with one hand by the arm, an' points wid the other. " See yonder ! " he says, wid a kind of strangled whisper. " See yonder, you sinful man ! " An' he pointed to a black heap lying in the shade of the hovel across the door ; an' then he motioned me back, so stern I durst not disobey him, an' himself went forward up to it.

" Johnny, my poor child," he says—his voice was like a cooing dove's—" Johnny, my poor child, what are ye lying out there for ? "

An' Johnny, for Johnny it was, sleeping like a tramp on the bare turf, he up like a shot, an' rubbed his eyes, an' stared at Father O'Hara like wan daft. " Oh, your Rivirence," says he, reproachful like, " sure you would not have me lying widin wid the poor little girl, an' the holy words not spoken over us yet ! " An' his Rivirence he beat his hands together, and fell upon the fella's neck and sobbed aloud. " I thank God," he cries, " I thank God ! "

" Father O'Hara, is it you ? " cries Johnny, that surprised and as if he had just waked out of a dream. " Oh, father, we have wanted ye sore, an' it's the cruel time we have had ! An' it's the cruel things that people have said of us, an' she as innocent as the flowers of the field. Sure she does not know what they do be meaning. My heart's been fit to break," he says.

An' then his Rivirence let a shout for me. " Come here," he says, " Laurence O'Moore, an' bless your good son, an' give praise to the Father above that kep' him and his bride from sin, when his earthly father would have driven them into it. Come here an' tell him that ye have seen the hardness of your heart, an' repented. Tell him that he an' the good little girl he has chosen for his wife will be welcome to your hearth. An' in the mcantime," he says, " Rosanna shall come to my house ; an' Johnny, me boy, it's meself will give the wedding-feast." An' after that what could I do ?

SEUMAS MACMANUS

B. 1868

THE BEWITCHED FIDDLE

FAIX, it's a good long wheen of years since it happened now. It was ould Jimmy Higgerty, that was uncle to Mickey across there, reharsed the passage to me. An' it was ould Jimmy himself, more betoken, that was the cause of the whole affair—for Jimmy, ye know, was what we call a canny man, very knowin' intirely, an' up to all sorts of saicrets that you nor me nor one belongin' to us, thanks be to Providence, knows nothin' at all, at all about. Jimmy was right-han' man with the fairies ; an' if ye'd believe all the stories ye hear goin' he come through some quare things, too, in his day—used to be out, they say, as reg'lar as the sun set, an' away ridin' aist an' waist with the good people, an' gettin' insight into their ways of workin'; an' sure it's meself that rec'le'ts if there was only a bit of a year-oul' calve sick from one end of the barony to the other, it was nothin' but post haste for Jimmy Higgerty to cure it—an', sure enough, when Jimmy put the charm on it, it either lived or died afther ; there was no middle coorse.

Well, howsomiver, in Jimmy's day there was in Doorin a one Solomon Casshidy ; an' the same Solomon in his young days was a thrifle wild—the fact is (to kill the hare at a blow), Solomon was the completest rascal ivir run on two feet, an' was a parable for the counthry. Christenin', weddin', wake, funeral, patthorn, fair, or market nivir wint off complete without Solomon Casshidy ; dance, raffle, or spree of any sort, shape, or patthorn, nivir missed Solomon Casshidy, who, by the way, was the very life an' sowl of the gatherin's ; an' people would as soon think of doin' without the fiddler at one of these merry-makin's as without Solomon Casshidy. An' that júst put me in mind that Solomon was the dandy hand at the fiddle ; the bate of him wasn't to be got between cock-crow an' candlelight the longest day in June. He would charm the heart of a whin-bush ; arrah, good luck to your wit, man, he'd actially make the fiddle spake ! They say it was as good as a sarcus to hear how he'd handle it.

But poor Solomon, good luck to him, soon came to the end of his

tether, an', afther takin' all the fun he could out of the worl', he, as himself said, turned over a new laif an' begun to look at the other side of the picther. An' I'm thinkin' whatsomiver he seen on the other side of it must have been deuced onpleasant, for the rollickin', singin', laughin', fiddlin', reckless, ne'er-do-well Solomon pulled a face on him the length of a tailyer's lapboord, an' if any of his ould comrades attmpted to make him convarsible on the fun that was goin' in any quarther of the counthry, Solomon would dhrop his jaws, an' fetch a groan would frighten a corp' ; an' " My fren'," he would say, " this is all vanity, vanity ! Life is hollow, an' these frivolities are only snares spread in our paths by the divil."

Anyhow, Solomon was an althered man, an' where he would go formerly to honour the Sabbath by a rousin' game of *caman* with the good boys, he was now seen makin' his way to the meetin'-house with a Bible anondher his arm the size of a salt-box, an' as many hime-books as would set up a hawker in a daicent way of thradin', an' he obsarvin' naither to the right nor to the left, but away a thousand miles ahead of him, as if he was always thryin' to make out the way to heaven somewhere in the skies foreninst him ; an' where he would of another time be makin' his way across the counthry, maybe to the shouldher of Srual mountain for a spree, with the fiddle anondher his coat, ye might now meet him in the dusk of the evenin', still with the fiddle ondher the coat, but on a far betther errand—goin' to some prayer-meetin' at Inver, or Killymard, or Ballywell, or the divil only knows where ; he wouldn't go within an ass's roar of a raffle-house ; an' if you tould him there was to be a dance or any other wee divarshin in sich and sich a place he'd strive to put the breadth of a townlan' betwixt him an' it, for he said the divil was chained to the back-stone of any house that there was a hornpipe played in.

Well, one evenin', it was in October, an' jist about night-fallin', Solomon was makin' his way for Billy Knox's of the head of the Glibe, where a great and very pious man, one Bartholomew Benjamin Rankin, was to hold a prayer-meetin' for the benefit of all the well-disposed sinners in that sthretch of counthry ; an' throth, it seems to me that, onless the Glibe's changed mortially within the last jinnyration, there must have been a daicent quantity of sinners in them same parts. But, as I was sayin', Solomon was this evenin' on the good arrand, with his fiddle peepin' out from ondher his coat—for ye see, Solomon's ould practice whin he was a sinner come in handy now that he was a saint,

an' no prayer-meetin' could be held without Solomon's fiddle to steady the voices, when they joined to sing the himes. She was a splendid piece of a fiddle, an' Solomon, when he turned over the new laif, was goin' out to brak her neck across the nixt ditch, when he remimbered how she might come in handy this way, so he said to himself (as he tould afther), that " he'd make the occasion of his sins a steppin'-stone to new vartues, an' cause her that was hairtofore jiggin' him down to the place below, now fiddle him into heaven."

He thought to himself this evenin' that he'd jist light the pipe to keep him company as he jogged on, so where do ye think he'd dhrop into, on purpose to light it, but ould Jimmy Higgerty's, the fairyman's, that I reharsed to ye about before. On layin' " Pagganinny," as he called the fiddle, down on a stool, whilst he was puttin' a screed of coal to the pipe, Jimmy Higgerty lifted her, an' dhrawin' the bow across her, he took a bar of a lively tune out of her, when Solomon jumped up as if he was sthruck.

" Higgerty, me good man," he says, " you have shocked me. Thim vain airs," siz he, " has been long unknown to that fiddle, an' I trusted that she would nivir more be an insthrument that the divil would gamble for sowls on. Paice, paice, and dhraw not the bow in idle vanity again ! "

" Arrah, good morra to ye," siz Jimmy, that way back to him, " but it's delicate yer narves must have got intirely, lately. Throth, Misther Casshidy, I seen the time this wouldn't frighted ye one bit " ; an' all at oncet he sthruck up, " Go to the divil an' shake yerself," while poor Solomon stood thrimblin' in the middle of the flure like a man with the aguey. Whin Jimmy finished up with a flourish that would have delighted Solomon the days he was at himself (for, be the same token, Solomon was no miss at handlin' the bow naither), he cut some quare figures with his left han' three times over the fiddle, an' handin' it to Solomon, he says, " May ye nivir have more raison to be frightened than by a jig from the same fiddle—*that's all I say !* "

Poor Solomon didn't know the hidden mainin' of them words, or it would have made him look crooked ; nor he didn't know naither that Jimmy had put *pisherogues* on the fiddle ; but all the same he took it from him with a glum look enough, and afther praichin' an edifyin' sarmon on frivolities, an' death an' jedgment, to Jimmy Higgerty, he betook him on the road again.

There was a wondherful congregation of the sinners an' saints of

the Glibe—but the sinners had the best of it anyhow, in regards to numbers—in Bill Knox's that night. An' Bartholomew Benjamin Rankin was there, an' it was as good as a sarmin in itself just to get one glance at his face. There was as much holiness an' piety in it, ye'd a'most think, as would save the sowls of a whole barony. Solomon, who now got all sorts an' sizes of respect, as bein' a reformed sinner, an' was looked up to with ten times as much honour and rivrence as was paid to them that was saints all their life, got a sait, as was usual, beside the praicher. An' it's himself that was proud, an' he'd look down on the common crowd below with a most pityin' look on his face. An' the well-disposed ones in the congregation would look up at Solomon an' then give a groan that ye might hear at Srual ; an' Solomon would look down on the sinners an' give an'other groan that ye might hear him at Barnesmore ; an' then both Solomon an' the sinners would look up at the rafthers, an' give a groan that ye might hear at Muckish. Aftther some time, when they had got faistin' their sowls fairly well on Solomon, a hime was called out, a very solemn one. " An'," says the praicher, lookin' at Solomon, " our saintly brother here, of whom aich and ivery heart in this gatherin' feels proud, an' whose pious ways are the glorification, admiration, an' edification of every true Christian since he gave up his ungodly life, an' turned onto the path of righteousness—brother Solomon will give us the keynote, an' lend us the aid of his unmusical box, throughout."

Brother Solomon, be me socks, dhrew a face on him the length of his own fiddle, as if he was thinkin' of his own unworthiness, poor man, an' says :

" It affords me a pious pleasure to dhraw my bow ondher the circumstances—that bow which so often snared me into the divil's sarvice ; but I thank God with my heart that I have long since departed from my wicked, wicked, unspaikably vile an' sinful ways ; an' this han' has long since forgotten them vain and ungodly airs that at one time occupied every spare moment of my then onchristian life—long since, I say, have I buried deep in obliven every remimbrance of thim wicked tunes, an' the cunnin' of my han' is now only used for a far loftier an' betther purpose. Bretherin, I shall begin."

And Solomon dhraws the bow across the fiddle, an' of all the himes tunes which was prented, what do ye think does he sthrike up ? " Go to the divil an' shake yerself ! " Och, it's as thrue as I'm tellin' it to ye. But, *ochón*, if there wasn't consternation in that house, I'm a

gentleman! Solomon himself stopped suddent, for all the world lookin' like a stuck pig; an' he looked at the praicher, an' the praicher looked at him, and the congregation looked at both of them, and then Solomon prayed from his heart as he nivr prayed afore, that the Lord in His marcy might make the flure open and swallow him. The flure, though, as I suppose ye have guessed, did not open, but Bartholomew Benjamin's mouth did, an' he sayed, siz he:

"Bretherin! bretherin! this is a sad fallin' away! Alas! alas! Who should have thought that Brother Solomon, the deformed sinner, would have returned to his ould godless coorses! The rulin' passion, my dear bretherin, is so sthrong in him—waxin' sthrong with new sthrength—that he has onvoluntarily bethrayed the divil that has again got hould on him. Bretherin, let us pray for him!"

An' in a jiffey the thundersthuck congregation were on their knees prayin' like Trojans for the delivery of poor Solomon from the divil. Solomon, of course, for appairance' sake, had to take to his knees, too, but between you an' me, it's meself's afear'd that all the prayers he said would not fetch him very far on the way to the first milestone that leads to heaven. I'll wager whoivir heerd him, that his prayers were sweet ones, that the divil might saize ould Jimmy Higgerty an' carry him off body an' bones, an' give him a toastin' on a special griddle down below. When they thought they had prayed long enough, an' that the divil was gone out of Solomon, they got up to their feet again, and they turned up the whites of their eyes till Bartholomew Benjamin announced that they would oncest more put Brother Solomon's faith to the test, to see if he had profited by the few minutes' sperritlial recreation that they had indulged in. Solomon lifted the bow, an' afore he started he turned up the whites of his eyes in the usual fashion, as if he was lookin' for guidance, but in his heart he was only callin' down another black curse on Jimmy Higgerty.

"Bretherin!" siz he, as solemn as a judge—"Bretherin! The temper" (by which he meant the divil of coorse) "possessed the fiddle, and not my humble self; in witness whereof just attind to the solemn an' addyfyin' air I will now produce for ye." An' down comes the bow on the fiddle, an' up starts that beautiful jig tune, "The Siege of Carrick!"

Och, tarnation to me waistcoat, but there was sich a scene in two minnits as would charm a dancin' mather! When Solomon played the first bar of it, he could as soon comb his head with his toes as he

could stop it. But that wasn't the best of it. Bartholomew Benjamin, instead of goin' into a cowl'd dead faint, as one would expect, begun to shuffle his feet in a suspicious way, an' afore ye'd say "thrapsticks" he was weltin' the flure like the broth of a boy, tearin' away at the jig like the ould Nick! An' in the squintin' of yer eye there wasn't a sowl anondher the roof, man, woman, or child, saint or sinner, that wasn't whackin' away at it like the forties, iviry man of them leatherin' the flure like a thrasher, jumpin' up till their heads would a'most sthrike the rafters, an' yellin' like red Injins, whilst me brave Solomon played like a black, put new life into the fiddle at ivery squeak, an' gave the jiggers whatever wee encouragement that he could spare time from the fiddle for:

"Come, boys, yez haven't fair play to foot it properly here. Yez is the finest set at a jig that I have faisted me eyes on since I give up me ungodly ways, an' it would be a pity for not to give yez ivery privilege—it's a fine clear moonlight, an' we'll go outside where we'll have room an' fair play at it. Come along, me mirry, mirry lads!" An' Solomon fiddled away out of the dure, an' the whole congregation leapt an' flung an' jigged it out in all possible an' onpossible shapes afther him. Och, they say it was a sight for sore eyes to see the capers that the party cut; iviry man jack of them tryin' to see who could be crazier than his naybour; an' out they got that way on the road, like a lunatic asylum turned loose for a holiday; an' Solomon headed down the road in the direction of Donegal, while the whole countryside turned out when they heard the yellin' an' fiddlin' an' prancin', an' seein' Solomon headin' them with the fiddle, an' Bartholomew Benjamin fillin' the front rank in company with his two feet, an' he jiggin' it away at the rate of a christenin'! The people were first inclined to laugh, but be the powdhers the nixt thing they done was join in themselves, an' foot it away afther the fiddle ninety-nine times crazier than the congregation. An' hot foot they kept it goin', up hill an' down dale, over height an' hollow, with fresh batches joinin' in at ivery lane an' turn, an' Solomon, the boy, layin' into the fiddle at a rate as if he was gettin' a salary for it; an', be the boots, by the time they raiched the foot of the road, you niver seen in all your born days a harvest fair or a Repale meetin' as big as it was!

Here Solomon turned to the left, with the purcession still jiggin' it afther him, an' he nixt got onto the lane that leads up to the Killymard ould graveyard, an' over the stile, in among the graves with the mirry

company brakin' their necks over, afther him ; an' when they got in here, Solomon made thracks for a nate dandy bit of a tombstone in the centre of the yard, an' upon it he h'isted himself, with Bartholomew Benjamin up beside him, whilst the remainder of the party reshumed their attitudes all roun' about, an' they fightin' like wild cats to see who would get pursession of the tombstones, for they saw they were as good as barn-doors for dancin' on. An' throgs, there might be purty good dancers there, but divil resave the one of them that Solomon and Bartholomew Benjamin couldn't take the shine out of. They had a bran' new tombstone, the pick an' choice of all in the yard, an' if they didn't do it in royal style, an' cut a copy to the crowd, call me a cuckoo !

But what would ye have of it, but the nixt man lands on the scene was Sandy Montgomery, the Recthor. He was passin' the road, an' seein' the fun in the graveyard, he come up in a t'undherin' passion to horsewhip iviry mother's sowl of them. But, sweet good luck to ye, if he didn't jump up on the fiddler's tombstone, an' catchin' Bartholomew Benjamin by the han', foot it away, likewise.

An' it would have gone on to daylight in the mornin', if ould Jimmy Higgerty, the rascal, who followed the fun the whole way from the Glibe, for the purpose of tastifyin' to it—if he hadn't come behin' Solomon an' tould him to kick up his right heel, dhraw his left thumb three times over the sthrings of the fiddle, an' look over his left shouldher at the moon, an' then see what music he'd take out of it. No sooner sayed nor done ; an' all at once the tune changed to a hime tune, all mournful, an' iviry heel in the graveyard was paralysed. Ivery sowl of them looked at one another like they wor wakenin' out of a dhraim.

Solomon himself dhrew up, an' he gave a bewildhered look all roun' him, an' then looked at Sandy Montgomery, who was standin' forenenst him on the stone, an' he as pale as a sheet. Ivery man of the three on the tombstone gave themselves up as lost men, ruined intirely, out an' out, afther makin' such spectacles of themselves for the counthry. The Recthor lost conthrol of himself completely, an' puttin' his fist anondher Solomon's nose, he says :

“ Ye common scoundhril, ye ; ye've made me disgrace my cloth, ye cut-throat villain——”

But afore he could get out another word, Solomon, who had some of the spunk of his early days in him still, and was a thrifle hasty,

besides that his dandher was riz in regards to the purty pickle he was in—Solomon ups with the fiddle, an' dhrawin' it roun' his head with a swing, he takes the Recthor across the noddle an' knocked him a'most into kingdom come, away off the tombstone. But, my hearty, in swingin' the fiddle, doesn't he catch Bartholomew Benjamin, who was standin' behind him, a nate little bit of a knock on the skull. So, now turnin' round to apologise to him, Bartholomew Benjamin ups with his fist an' plants it undher Solomon's nose, too, for he was just commencin' a norration.

“ Ye mane, onprincipled, ungodly bla'guard ! ”

But Solomon couldn't stand this neither. He says to himself he might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, and that when he knocked down a Recthor, he might with an aisier conscience knock down a praicher. So he took the praicher a wallop with the fiddle that left him sprawlin' in the Recthor's lap with his heels uppermost, and Solomon leapt from the tombstone, an' off through the crowd for the bare life, wallopin' them right an' left. They all slunk home afther a while with their tails between their legs, but poor Solomon was the worst of all. He made “ Pagganinny ” into smithereens—what remained of her. An' he didn't lift his head for twelve months afther.

THE RESURRECTION OF DINNY O'DOWD

SEUMAS MACMANUS

IN the parish of Pulbochog where me father's people come from there's many a man strugglin' for sthraws, bekase the rents are that big, and the farms that small—but there's wan man, and only wan, who is as ondependent as a prince—and as well-to-do after his own fashion—and that's Manis O'Dowd. And Manis is as he is, bekase he houlds his bit of land free of all rent while grass grows, and water runs, and crows put out their tongue.

How he comes to be this way is a great story, in throth, and a dhroll wan.

Manis's father that is now, was Cormac, and his father again was Dinny O'Dowd, or Dinny the Ghost, as he was known till the day of his death. And him it was that got for the wee farm the privilege of goin' rent free for ever and a day.

I dar' say it's a good four score of years ago now since Dinny the Ghost (as he wasn't named just then), mainin' for to be both good till himself and good till his farm, marri'd a wan Molshie M'Connell from the next parish, in the hopes that she'd fetch him both favour and fortune. But God help poor Dinny, the fortune she fetched him was the clothes on her back and a bad temper; and Molshie wasn't the third night in the house till Dinny seen the coat-tails of Paice pass out of his doore.

But me brave Dinny struggled with Molshie and the wurrl' as best he could for three years. But the rent was high and hard to pay, and for farm produce there was next to no price at all; so that debts and difficulties begun to hail on the poor divil. And to make bad worse, there riz bad blood atween him and the man marched him, Big Denis M'Cue, about a right-o'-way, which got so bitter that to save his skin he had to go afore the magistrates and swear his life again Big Dinis, who threatened to murdher him afore br'akfast some mornin'. But instead of mendin' matthers this only made things worse; the M'Cues now s'ore be all the Saints in the Almanac that they'd never get a paiceful night's sleep till they'd see Dinny O'Dowd's blood flowin'.

"By this and by that," says Dinny till himself at last, "this must end. This climate isn't 'hol'some for me, so I'll thry a change." Without lettin' sowl or sinner know, he made up he'd slip off unknownst, and away till Amirikay. "Me wife and me neighbours 'ill maybe both be better of their tempers be the time I come back, and I'll arn as much money as 'ill lift me out o' me-difficulties."

No sooner did night fall that selfsame day than he went out to fother the cows (be pretence); but me brave Dinny took the road in rale 'arnest, to push for a sayport and sail for the Lan' of Liberty. But he wasn't three fields from the house when he met a beggarman that he gave a shillin' to swap clothes with him—so it would be the harder to detect him when the wife would rise the hewin'-cry afther him. That done, then wanst away and aye away, me brave Dinny wasn't seen or heard of more.

But for the misfortunate poor beggarman 'twas the black hour that he took Dinny's shillin' and swapped clothes with him! For where did the divil temp' his steps only across M'Cue's lan', over the very right-o'-way that riz all the bad blood. And who (as the divil would still have it) should be convaynient but Big Dinis M'Cue himself, with a tarrific bludgeon of a stick in his han'. And, "Well, bad luck to you, O'Dowd!" says he, knowin' Dinny in the dark (as he thought) be the hat and sleeved waistcoat and whole rig-out—"Bad luck seize you, O'Dowd," says he, "for a provokin' ruffian! Take that!" and he tumbled the beggar with wan blow of his bludgeon; and he never spoke more, he was as dead as an iron dog. Big Dinis he went lookin' for help, and himself and his brother atween them hoisted the corp on their shoulders, and marched with him across hedge and hill till they come to Mondarrig, where they tied stones to it, and sunk it in the deepest boghole they could find. Then says they, "The Lord be thankit! Dinny O'Dowd's over and done with; and we'll have paice and a right-o'-way all to ourselves for the time to come."

Next mornin' the *gar* went roun' that Dinny O'Dowd was a-missin', went out to fother the cows and didn't come home las' night, and Molshie was disthracted. And some sayed this, and some more sayed that; but it wasn't long till most of them agreed that Dinny had bid good-bye to hardships and hard-livin', and gone to the river and dhrownded himself; and the M'Cues sayed they had seen a man of his height and appearance goin' in the direction of the river las' night. But when the river was dragged and the country screenged and sarched

from end to wynd, thrace or thrack wasn't got of him. And poor Molshie was left to mourn and to manage as best she might.

And poorly enough she did manage for wan year and for longer. As Big Dinis M'Cue's land lay into her own, and as she was sorely in need of a man to care her farm and Big Dinis just as sorely in need of a woman to care his house, people thought it 'ud be *a go* atween them. Dinis, in throth, begun to show Molshie attention enough—but she, of course, hadn't sartain enough proof that Dinny was dead. When, as luck would have it, just near on the score of the second twelvemonth after Dinny's departure, doesn't a man who was barrowin' turf in the bog discover a corp lyin' in wan of the holes. The word was passed, and when the people crowded to see it, though the faytures was gone, all his neighbours at wanst recognised Dinny O'Dowd be the oul' grey hat and the sleeved waistcoat with brassy buttons, and every article of apparel. Even Lanty Meehan, the shoemaker, could swear to his high-lows and the patches he put on the uppers. Poor Molshie come, wailin', and recognised him too, and cried over him her hearty fill, as if there had never afore been a wife so grieved afther a man.

Well, a hasty wake and a hurried funeral it got, and they hid it away as fast as they could.

Poor Dinny, poor man, he reached Amerikay aii safe and in good time, and went to work in the lead works, where he wrought hard and very hard for twelve months, and then lost his health complete be lead poisonin', and had to take to his bed, where he lay atween life and daith for near twelve months more. And as soon as he found fit to put a foot in under him he got up; and as his only hope of life was to get to Irelan' again, a few of his friends put as much together as bought him a ticket, and sent him off.

When Dinny landed he was noways unlike a very far-gone ghost: as white as bleached lint, only the eyes of him was sunk in his head and black round about, and the skin only hangin' from his bones. "But what I feel worst," says he till himself, lookin' down at his rags, "is the ondaicent clothes I have—they'd disgrace a scarecrow." Hot-foot, then, he started for home; and when he came near where he'd be known, he waited till night fell on him sooner nor be seen comin' back from America in such duds. And when night did fall, on he went, and for his own house as smooth as he could, takin' the fields for it, instead of the roads, so no wan would see him. And behold ye,

when he climbed in of his own garden what does he find, where Molshie had put them to get the air, only his own daicent oul' rig that he'd swapped with the beggar two years ago. "Thank God!" says Dinny, "for it's Him put them my way." And without any more ado off him he peels his own string o' rags and gets into the sleeved waistcoat with the brassy buttons, and claps his own brave oul' grey hat on his head. "Molshie, the knave, must a made the poor beggarman give them up," says he; "but it stands me good sarvice she did."

Now, as fortune would have it, this was only the third night afther the berral, and Big Dinis had strolled into Molshie's to comfort her, and settle up wee mathers about the weddin'—which was now fixed upon for sartain, and to take place as soon as they could daicently think of houldin' it. And the both of them were sittin' purty close together, love-makin', when me brave Dinny advanced and looked in of the winda! The first thing upset them then was an onearthly yell without; and the next thing the doore burstin' in, and Dinny O'Dowd that they had turned the sods on, three days afore, Dinny, in his oul' sleeved waistcoat, and lookin' more daithly than any dead man, jumped into the middle of the floore!

Molshie she gave a scream out of her, and fainted dead away. Big Dinis M'Cue, with his mouth open, lost the power to aither move or spaik, till Dinny, shakin' a bony fist undher his nose, says, "Ye murtherin' villian!"—which was a common word of abuse of his—"Ye murtherin' villian, M'Cue! I'll niver rest until I see ye in the hangman's hands!" Big Dinis with that got the power of his lungs and his legs all of a suddent, and lettin' a bawl out of him like a calf a-sthranglin', he dives atween Dinny's legs, and flew like a weaver's shuttle through the doore.

Poor Molshie was in a rale bad way, and every time she opened her eyes and saw Dinny's white face and the sleeved waistcoat with the brassy buttons bendin' over her, she went off in another faint again. Says Dinny, "The woman'll die dead of the fear o' me onless I send in some of the neighbours to bring her to." So out he went and down the road to Neilis Lainaghan's, and he heerd big noise and fiddlin' as he come till it—for there was a dance in Neilis's, and all the countryside was gathered. Dinny lifted the latch and walked into the middle of them, and that ins'ant there was a scraim in this corner of the house, and a yell in that, and a groan in the other, and a racket and a rush all over, and a crush and a dive for the doore; and in less time than I say it

Dinny was standin' alone by himself, barrin' for half-a-dozen fainted women and girls that was lyin' among broken chairs; and every minute there was wan of these women comin' to, and, seein' Dinny, givin' another scraim and goin' off.

"Well, bad cess to yous, wan and all!" says Dinny, afther he'd stood in speechless wonderment for five minutes—"The worst of bad snuff to yous, wan and all! Is the wurl' gone mad, or what's come over Pulbochog anyhow, that the sight of a man come back afther two years sends every wan helther-skelther like frightened hares in a harvest-fiel'?"

But it was goin' from bad to worse with the faintin' women; so, off he had to take himself, and fare further. But behold ye, there wasn't a hut or house he come till that wasn't as emp'y as if the plague had cleaned them out; and he could only hear the shouts of the people as they were hurryin' and scurryin' far over the face of the country. "Musha, and may the divil dhrive yous to the fackthory where they brew bad luck!" says he, turnin', and makin' for home again.

Intil his own byre he went—for he'd got enough of Molshie for wan evenin'—and threw himself down to sleep under the cow's head; and slep' purty hearty.

Now, when Dinny left home first, the lan' had been in arrears ov rent, and it had been gettin' deeper intil it since he left; and the land-lord had at last just got a decree again' Molshie, and had ordhered the bailiff to go to Molshie's, and seize something on the decree. So, it was on this very mornin' I'm talkin' of that the bailiff had made up to come on his decree. "I'll be there," says he, "afore Molshie is out and about, and I'll have me seizure lifted and carried off with small throuble." So, close afther the screek of day he come, and walked intil the byre. "Here's a cow," says he, "'ill be good for ten poun' off the decree," and walked forrid to the baste's head to liberate her. And that minute up jumped Dinny, and naturally flew for the fellow's throat. But, my sorra, the bailiff, when he got the first gleek of him and seen who it was, didn't wait, but let out of him a yell and a howl, and sprung for the door, and away, and never waited or stopped till he had put hills behind him.

Dinny prayed bad prayers on the bailiff that had come to seize his only cow, and on the lan'lord that sent him, and then he started out hot-foot and never stopped or stayed till he was at the lan'lord's house. The bailiff had reached there long ahead of him, and when he

toul' the lan'lord that he didn't lift the decree bekase Dinny O'Dowd's ghost had riz at the cow's head, and spouted fire at him from both mouth and nothrils, the lan'lord gave him no end of abuse for an *amadan* and an ediot, and swore he'd dismiss him and have a *man* in his place afore the sun set.

But behould ye! the lan'lord was only warmin' up to it, and the poor bailiff, with his teeth still chatterin', takin' all insults as compliments, when the doore opens and Dinny steps in.

The tongue stood still in the lan'lord's mouth, and the hair riz on his head at the sight, and the poor bailiff give a howl and dived in under the lan'lord's chair.

"Small wonder yous is mortially ashamed of yerselves," Dinny thunders at them, "for to go for to take away a lone woman's cow!"

"It was—it was all a mistake," says the lan'lord, when he got his tongue—"It was all a great mistake, entirely," says he, "and I'm very, very sorry for it, and it'll never occur again, Misther O'Dowd," says he, him thremblin' like a sally leaf, and the colour of the limewall in the face.

"Ay, *Misther O'Dowd*—no less," says Dinny till himself. "Troth the lan'lords has been improvin' in their manners since I left the country." And then says he, spaikin' out, "I'm glad to hear ye say it. For in faith I thought it was a cold welcome to a man comin' back afther bein' two years gone from yous."

"Oh, then, *Misther O'Dowd*, we're—we're—we're glad to see ye back. I suppose ye're goin' round to see all the neighbours afore ye go again; so, I'll not be delayin' ye. Good mornin'," says the lan'lord.

"Not so quick, be yer laive, sir," says Dinny. "I seem about as welcome to the neighbours as to yerself and yer bailiff; they all screech, and show me their heels, whatever the divil's the matther with them."

The lan'lord was thryin' to be as plaisin' as possible. "Oh," says he, "*Misther O'Dowd*, that's all only bekase we arn't *used* to you yet."

"Plaise God, then, it'll not be my fault for the time to come," says Dinny, "or yous 'ill get used to me."

"Oh, *Misther O'Dowd*, don't say that," says the lan'lord, beseechin' him.

"What the divil do *you* mane, now?" says Dinny.

"*I* mane," says the other, "*I* mane that—that—Oh, ye know what *I* mane. *I* mane that, of course, we're very glad entirely to see ye;

but—but we think ye'd maybe be better and happier *where ye were*," says he.

"Happier!" says Dinny. "Look at me! Look at me! Ye're now lookin' at a man that suffered hell since he went away."

The poor bailiff give a screech from in under the chair, and the lan'lord give another screech.

"Plaise, Misther O'Dowd, if ye go away from here, I'll do anything at all to sarve ye."

"I only ax sparin's, and I'll bring ye here inside wan twelvemonth, and count ye down, every sovereign I owe ye, even if I have to rob the divil to get it."

"Oh, no, no, no! Plaise, no! Don't bring me any money. I forgive ye every penny ye owe me, and I'll make ye out a clear resait up till this day, if ye promise to put it in your pocket, and depart in paice."

"Oh, ye ginerous man!" says Dinny, overcome with such on-expected goodness. "I'll niver forget that act to ye. And for the time to come, as sure as ever galeday comes round, ye'll find me the first man here in the mornin', with me rent to ye."

"Oh, no! Oh, no, plaise!" says the lan'lord. "Don't come with any rent to me, ever. I'll here and now fill ye out a resait up till the year of ten thousand and nothin'—just to save ye the throuble and worry of comin' back."

And there and then, without more ado, he fills out a resait to say that "the undhersigned, Dinny O'Dowd, has paid me every penny of rent ever due again' his farm in Pulbochog, or that ever will be due against it, up till and includin' the year ten thousand and nothin'."

And the dumbfoundhered Dinny takes this from the lan'lord's thrimblin' hand, and pockets it, and walks off.

But he didn't see man or mortal, sowl or sinner, nor couldn't know what happened to them, till he come as far as the chapel; and this he found panged with people to the door. For, the way of it was, Molshie, by the advice of the neighbours, had axed for a Mass to be sayed that Dinny's soul might get rest, and all the parish had gathered, to join their prayers.

Into the chapel poor Dinny walks; and the minute they saw him, the congregation let wan howl out o' them that near carried the roof off the buildin', and they made such a rush for the three doors that it

was a marcy they didn't take the sidewalls with them ; and Dinny found himself alone in the chapel with the priest.

The same priest was a purty courageous man, and he actually walked forrid to Dinny and addhressed him—commandin' him in the Name to say what was a-throuble to him to fetch him back here.

" A-throuble to me ! " says Dinny. " I knew nothin' but throuble since I left here."

" To yer shame be it said, Dinny O'Dowd," says the priest. " It wasn't for want of warnin's enough from me, ye went asthray."

" Thru for ye—thru for ye, father," says Dinny. " And it's often when I was sufferin' that I sayed the same to meself."

" Well, well, it's me is the sorry man for ye, Dinny O'Dowd. But it's too late to lament now. Is there anything I can do for ye ? " says the priest.

" Yes, yer reverence, can ye tell me why these people loses their wits and runs like the Roe wather when they see me ? " says Dinny.

" Oh, that's only natural," says the priest. " They'll not be content till ye're gone again. So hurry yerself."

" Till I'm gone ! But I'm come to remain," says Dinny.

" Come ! come ! " says the other, " ye can't do that, ye know."

" And why not, may I ax ? " says Dinny.

" There's no whys in it," says the other. " If ye have anything on yer mind, or any requist to ax, ax it and go."

" Well, upon my veracity, that is a cool way to thrait wan who expected a wee bit of welcome and pleasure afther two years of torture," says Dinny.

" Ye're afther confessin' ye 'arned it," says the priest.

" But I've made up my mind to turn a new laif," Dinny said.

" It's too late now if ye had made up yer mind to turn a whole grove," says the priest. " There's no second chance in your wurrl," says he. " So, right about face now," says he, " and march ; or if ye don't do it of yer own free will, I'll soon find a means of makin' ye."

Poor Dinny, poor man, was sore put about at this traitment. But, says he, " It 'ud puzzle ye to take stockin's off a barefooted man. How am I to go without either money or mains ? "

" Come ! none of yer nadiums," says the priest, " go the way ye come."

" I come in *The Irish Maiden*," says he, " to Darry, and had to pay smartly for it."

" What do ye mane ? " says the priest, says he ; and he puts his hand on Dinny, and feels him. " Aren't ye a dead man, sir ? " says he.

But, faix, the grip of Dinny didn't at all feel like what a ghost should be, to the priest's mighty wondherment ; and he never let go of him till he marched him out of the chapel, and along the road, hearin' Dinny's story as they went. The people they were crouchin' on the hills watchin' them both, and waitin' to see Dinny go off like a puff o' smoke. But that they didn't see.

The priest marched Dinny straight home to Molshie, and toul' her it wasn't Dinny's ghost at all, but Dinny himself. But Molshie tuk her heels with her away from the house, and wild horses wouldn't dhrag her back again. She'd never come, she sayed, to live with a ghost.

An' she was as good as her word ; and in troth Dinny didn't br'ak his heart with the grief, either.

Big Dinis M'Cue, when he got the fright, never stopped runnin' till he reached the polis barracks, and give himself up for the murdher.

Dinny O'Dowd himself tuk a holiday to attend the hangin'. And, happy as he was that day, he was never a day less so till the day he died, and left his freehould to his son Cormac, a child Molshie left with him ; and Cormac left it to his son again, Manis ; and as I sayed, Manis and his freehould are flourshin' in Pulbochog at this day. And may they long continue so.

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

1872-1918

PRISCILLA

PRICILLA was dead, and all the women of the village had come to her waking. They moved about the big house where she had lived so long and so quietly as though they had never seen it before ; and they never had, without Priscilla.

They moved silently, or came together in little groups to talk about her. They seemed as much amazed as sorry. Who could imagine Priscilla dead ? Surely she was the oldest woman in the village ; and yet she seemed not so very old ; but no one remembered the village without her, and no one remembered her young. Perhaps she had entered into their lives unnoticed, and only when she came to her womanhood had taken her place in their sight, as a little unknown seedling will one day become a tree and a landmark.

Perhaps in the great house she had passed her shadowy girlhood, and only became a personage when her uncle died, leaving her his sole and only heir. Then she crept forth, and her fading hands drew the hearts of the people towards her.

Was she rich ? Who can say ? The black, barrack-like house, with its neglected garden, had no air of wealth about it ; but never a child or woman came to Priscilla for help and went away empty-handed. Some said that for this latter reason the house grew more desolate as it grew old—that pictures and silver and ornaments vanished one by one.

But others would have it that Priscilla had a box of money in her room, corded, sealed, and locked. For true it was that such a box, to all appearance, was there, as Ann O'Ruark, who nursed her once in an illness, could tell.

Now she lay dead, and it seemed to the women of the little village as though something marvellous had happened—as though the old round tower they looked upon every morning when they opened their doors had crumbled in the night, or as though the church bell they depended upon to awaken them at six had forgotten to ring, leaving them late and bewildered. True, she might have been ill, or gone

away on a visit, or vanished for a time. But to die! No one ever thought that of Priscilla after all those years. Why, even now the children from the cottages were running down the street on the stroke of five to meet her coming from her Saturday's marketing with something hidden for them in her pocket. Yet they had been told she would come up the narrow street no more. Yes, even now poor cripple Janie Doyle was turning her face to the window to be ready for the smile and cheery word that always met her. Yet she too knew Priscilla would never pass again.

All the women there sitting at her wake felt that to-morrow they would put on their shawls and run to tell Priscilla their joys and sorrows, or to ask her advice, as they had done all the time since they became aware she *was*. And Priscilla would be lying with that strange smile upon her face, so far removed from them.

Was she so very old—Priscilla? Hers was a face you could not imagine had ever been young. Wrinkled and fallen away, you could not fix and fill it with youth.

Once she had said to a child, "I was light as a bird when I was young as you"; and the little one had gone away troubled at the lie. She knew, as all the children did, that Priscilla had never, never been young.

Though Priscilla knew everything of everybody, nobody knew anything of Priscilla, except, of course, that she was an old maid—as any one of the name of Priscilla must be. Why, the very sound of it was enough to tell how prim, how neat, how old-maidish she was. No one could have imagined her with a lover. Many a time the village women had sat and talked of Priscilla, what she must have been like as a girl—if she ever had been a girl: the primmest of little girls, who always had her hair smooth and lessons learnt: a girl with large feet and high, buttoned boots, with every button fastened in its place; thin legs, of course; a waist that had never known tight-lacing; straight hair, first in a plait and later a tight coil at the back of her smooth head: a high white forehead, intelligent grey eyes, a rather large and rather pink nose, a pleasant mouth, thin neck and breast, long arms, large nervous hands. Yes, that must have been Priscilla, if ever she had been a girl. But there was no lover in the setting of Priscilla's girlhood. No, she hated men, and rough boys the natty Priscilla must have always shunned, nor could she, with her cleverness, ever have admired the developing youth.

Yes, she hated men and all their sex ; she was hardly kind to little boys—they were cruel to her cats, she would say. But the girl babies, how she loved them ! There was never a birth in the village where she was not first visitor to the new arrival. And if it was a boy, she would look close into the little red face till he raised his voice and howled. Then she would laugh. " Shout for it and you will get it, my lad ; only shout long enough and you will get it." Then she would press a golden pound into his little fist and leave him. But if it was a girl, she would take it in her arms, and if it was crying it would stop that minute. She would drop a tear upon it, perhaps, and whisper things into its little unconscious ears. When she was leaving she would put a guinea into its hands, with the words, " For your sad heart, my girl, for your sad heart." So the baby would be added to her list of loves.

But she liked best the lovelorn maidens who would come to her with their stories. They were indeed for her heart of hearts. Many a sorrowful soul that had forgotten how to be proud would after consulting with her become strong again, and win the lover back by flaunting who had grown weary of too patient a love.

The house was built like one that had never been intended to hold the young ; dark, gloomy, rambling. Priscilla was the only one to whom it seemed a fitted background.

The little children who braved its awfulness would hasten, afraid of its silence, from passage to passage till they reached Priscilla, every minute expecting a horrible something belonging to the mould and age to spring upon them from each dark place. Only the mysterious cupboards with hidden sweets and jams, found nowhere else, could tempt them to come. And it took three of them to do it, clinging together, and stopping often with shrieks that were not all laughter but served to fill the dusty silence.

When Priscilla died there turned up from somewhere a far-removed cousin—a stern, middle-aged woman, who looked at the world through smoked glasses ; and no doubt the world looked grey to her. She had no tears, no smiles, no sentiments, only the hardness of middle life, which has left the softness of youth behind and not yet reached the softness of age. She was a business-like person, and ordered everything and everybody as if she had lived all her life in Priscilla's house. The people wondered if she would get Priscilla's box of treasure ; but, of course, there was no one else. The cousin was making herself busy, pretending to be concerned for Priscilla. Why had she not come

before to take care of her? She wanted to blame somebody for not calling in a doctor. But she ought to know Priscilla would not have the doctor. She had a perfect horror of the doctor, and would never see him, or speak of him. There was only one doctor in the village—an old man, as old as Priscilla, it might be—a married man with grown-up sons and daughters, now married themselves and doing well. Once a neighbour had spoken of the doctor to Priscilla. It was to repeat a story of his past, a story of a lonely girl he had jilted almost on their wedding-day, and how the girl had vanished and been heard of no more; but that had not happened in the village, and so the village was not interested in the particulars. When Priscilla heard the story she rose from her seat and went to the window without a word. So the neighbour thought she was weary, and changed the subject from men and their misdeeds, but she did make a parting remark to the effect that the doctor and his wife never got on together. She was surprised when Priscilla said, in a voice so sweet and far away she hardly heard it, "Poor lad! poor lad!"

Priscilla would not have the doctor come near her when she lived, but when she died he had to be called in. People who watched him coming were surprised to see him falter, he ought to have been so used to death. And yet he came like one most cruelly afraid. He stood at the door of the room where she lay for a few moments, as though unable to enter. Then he pushed the door open and went as if with an effort. When he reached her bedside he stood silent, looking upon her face. And there were those there who thought they had heard him whisper, "Priscilla!" and then louder, as though she must hear, "Priscilla!"

But Priscilla was dead, and all the village had come to her wake; two nights they had sat up, and this was the third. The will had been read—such as it was; for there was little to leave to anybody. Yet every one had had a trifle, the house had gone to the cousin, but there was no money to speak of—nothing more except the little wooden box, corded, locked, and sealed—the box that must contain the body of the fortune. The cousin's fingers had been on the cords, the eyes of the village women had been turned to it, waiting for it to open, when they were told it was to be buried with her. What an idea! Whoever heard of a box being buried in a tomb? Who would ever have thought she would have carried away what she could no longer want? Who would have imagined Priscilla a miser?

The crowd had all gone to the dining-room at the end of the long passage in the west wing, and the cousin was sitting alone in the room with the box ; upstairs Priscilla was lying, and she would never know—never know the seals were broken and the knots undone. Surely, it was no harm to open and look in—no, not to touch a single penny, since she was such a screw—only to open. No box was ever yet buried by a woman unopened. The lid lay loose.

The cousin sat back a moment, then went upon her knees and raised the cover. She saw the contents were wrapped in white paper. She pulled it off and drew forth what came to her hand. Astonishment was upon her face, for first there came a dress—a white satin dress—then a long veil, then a wreath of orange blossoms. Shoes, gloves, and underwear, all lace and ribbons, all sewn by hand in tiny stitches, surely Priscilla's own. What was this the cousin had stumbled on unawares ? A wedding outfit, Priscilla's wedding outfit, breathing the breath of years, lavender and age. How time had ruined all, as it had destroyed Priscilla's love-story ! How was it the cousin never knew of this prepared wedding ? Where or who was the man ? She had known little of Priscilla when she was young, only that she was fatherless and motherless, and that an uncle had taken charge of her ; that she had grown up between the grey walls of her uncle's quiet, lonely house and a convent school, where she had spent half her time. Always unnoticed, silent, and companionless, was it because there was no one who cared enough about her to draw her from her solitude ? There was something, the cousin fancied she half-remembered, something of a scandal of Priscilla and a young doctor, something about love-letters and stolen meetings discovered at the convent. Was it possible Priscilla had returned home to work her wedding outfit, while the young doctor had forgotten his promise and married money while she still was awaiting him ? But it was a vague memory, and might not have been her.

The cousin bent above the box. Nothing else ; no money—not a penny. Ah ! here was a key to the story, a bundle of old letters—love-letters, for were they not tied by a silken bow ? Poor Priscilla !

As she took them into her hands she fancied she heard the sound of a woman sobbing far away ; it might be upstairs with the dead. Some friend of Priscilla's, no doubt. She turned the letters over in her hands. She wished that wild crying would stop. It disturbed her. She laid her fingers upon the beknotted strings, then hesitated.

Should she dare spy into the secrets of the helpless dead? But curiosity was strong; she loosed the ribbons. At the same time a wild cry resounded through the room. She sprang to her feet; the letters in her hands, and looked fearfully around. There was no one there. It must have been outside. Yes; it came from the floor above—from Priscilla's room—long, sad, and awful; the sound of a woman's wild grief.

The cousin thrust the letters into her pocket, and ran down the hall, calling to the people to hurry to the room above. She called to them to bring hot blankets and restoratives, that Priscilla was not dead, that she had waked in terror, finding herself decked out for death. And all the time she was shouting to them she was running up the long staircase and down the corridors to the room where the crying came from. Then she called, "Priscilla, I am coming; don't be afraid; Priscilla, I am coming." She imagined Priscilla sitting up in her grave-clothes, half mad with terror at her position. When she touched the handle of the door the crying ceased. She opened it, and stood half-fainting upon the threshold. In her coffin lay Priscilla stiff and dead, her hands clasped as they had been when she was laid there, her face unchanged, the great room empty—death everywhere.

The cousin stood dumb at the door, the women crowding about her with hot blankets and restoratives. "It was a mistake," she said; and pushing them back, closed the door.

She went downstairs to the room where the trunk lay, and drawing the letters from her pocket placed them back unopened where she had found them. With reverent hands she laid the wedding things one by one in their place, and when she had finished she sealed and corded the box.

When Priscilla went to her sleeping-place the next day, there was borne by her side a little trunk, and it was laid at her feet in the cold vault that held so many dead.

E. C. SOMERVILLE AND MARTIN ROSS

THE HOUSE OF FAHY

NOTHING could shake the conviction of Maria that she was by nature and by practice a house dog. Every one of Shreelane's many doors had, at one time or another, slammed upon her expulsion, and each one of them had seen her stealthy, irrepressible return to the sphere that she felt herself so eminently qualified to grace. For her the bone, thriftily interred by Tim Connor's terrier, was a mere diversion; even the fruitage of the ashpit had little charm for an accomplished *habitué* of the kitchen. She knew to a nicety which of the doors could be burst open by assault, at which it was necessary to whine sycophantically; and the clinical thermometer alone could furnish a parallel for her perception of mood in those in authority. In the case of Mrs. Cadogan she knew that there were seasons when instant and complete self-effacement was the only course to pursue; therefore when, on a certain morning in July, on my way through the downstairs regions to my office, I saw her approach the kitchen door with her usual circumspection, and, on hearing her name enunciated indignantly by my cook, withdraw swiftly to a city of refuge at the back of the hay-rick, I drew my own conclusions.

Had she remained, as I did, she would have heard the disclosure of a crime that lay more heavily on her digestion than her conscience.

"I can't put a thing out o' me hand but he's watching me to whip it away!" declaimed Mrs. Cadogan, with all the disregard of her kind for the accident of sex in the brute creation. "'Twas only last night I was back in the scullery when I heard Bridget let a screech, and there was me brave dog up on the table eating the roast beef that was after coming out from the dinner!"

"Brute!" interjected Philippa, with what I well knew to be a simulated wrath.

"And I had planned that bit of beef for the luncheon," continued Mrs. Cadogan in impassioned lamentation, "the way we wouldn't have to intrude on the cold turkey! Sure he has it that dhragged, that all we can do with it now is run it through the mincing machine for the Major's sandwiches."

At this appetising suggestion I thought fit to intervene in the deliberations.

"One thing," I said to Philippa afterwards, as I wrapped up a bottle of Yanatas in a Cardigan jacket and rammed it into an already apoplectic Gladstone bag, "that I do draw the line at, is taking that dog with us. The whole business is black enough as it is."

"Dear," said my wife, looking at me with almost clairvoyant abstraction, "I could manage a second evening-dress if you didn't mind putting my tea-jacket in your portmanteau."

Little, thank Heaven! as I know about yachting, I knew enough to make pertinent remarks on the incongruity of an ancient 60-ton hireling and a fleet of smart evening-dresses; but none the less I left a pair of indispensable boots behind, and the tea-jacket went into my portmanteau.

It is doing no more than the barest justice to the officers of the Royal Navy to say that, so far as I know them, they cherish no mistaken enthusiasm for a home on the rolling deep when a home anywhere else presents itself. Bernard Shute had unfortunately proved an exception to this rule. During the winter, the invitation to go for a cruise in the yacht that was in process of building for him hung over me like a cloud; a timely strike in the builder's yard brought a respite, and, in fact, placed the completion of the yacht at so safe a distance that I was betrayed into specious regrets, echoed with an atrocious sincerity by Philippa. Into a life pastorally compounded of Petty Sessions and lawn-tennis parties, retribution fell when it was least expected. Bernard Shute hired a yacht in Queenstown, and one short week afterwards the worst had happened, and we were packing our things for a cruise in her, the only alleviation being the knowledge that, whether by sea or land, I was bound to return to my work in four days.

We left Shreelane at twelve o'clock, a specially depressing hour for a start, when breakfast has died in you, and lunch is still remote. My last act before mounting the dogcart was to put her collar and chain on Maria and immure her in the potato-house, whence, as we drove down the avenue, her wails rent the heart of Philippa and rejoiced mine. It was a very hot day, with a cloudless sky; the dust lay thick on the white road, and on us also, as, during two baking hours, we drove up and down the long hills and remembered things that had been left behind, and grew hungry enough to eat sandwiches that tasted suspiciously of roast beef.

The yacht was moored in Clountiss Harbour ; we drove through the village street, a narrow and unlovely thoroughfare, studded with public-houses, swarming with children and poultry, down through an ever-growing smell of fish, to the quay.

Thence we first viewed our fate, a dingy-looking schooner, and the hope I had secretly been nourishing that there was not wind enough for her to start, was dispelled by the sight of her topsail going up. More than ever at that radiant moment—as the reflection of the white sail quivered on the tranquil blue, and the still water flattered all it reproduced, like a fashionable photographer—did I agree with George Herbert's advice, " Praise the sea, but stay on shore."

" We must hail her, I suppose," I said drearily. I assailed the *Eileen Oge*, such being her inappropriate name, with desolate cries, but achieved no immediate result beyond the assembling of some village children round us and our luggage.

" Mr. Shute and the two ladies was after screeching here for the boat awhile ago," volunteered a horrid little girl, whom I had already twice frustrated in the attempt to seat an infant relative on our bundle of rugs. " Timsy Hallahane says 'twould be as good for them to stay ashore, for there isn't as much wind outside as'd out a candle."

With this encouraging statement the little girl devoted herself to the alternate consumption of gooseberries and cockles.

All things come to those who wait, and to us arrived at length the gig of the *Eileen Oge*, and such, by this time, were the temperature and the smells of the quay that I actually welcomed the moment that found us leaving it for the yacht.

" Now, Sinclair, aren't you glad we came ? " remarked Philippa, as the clear green water deepened under us, and a light briny air came coolly round us with the motion of the boat.

As she spoke, there was an outburst of screams from the children on the quay, followed by a heavy splash.

" Oh, stop ! " cried Philippa in an agony ; " one of them has fallen in ! I can see its poor little brown head ! "

" 'Tis a dog, ma'am," said briefly the man who was rowing stroke.

" One might have wished it had been that little girl," said I, as I steered to the best of my ability for the yacht.

We had traversed another twenty yards or so, when Philippa, in a voice in which horror and triumph were strangely blended, exclaimed, " She's following us ! "

" Who ? The little girl ? " I asked callously.

" No," returned Philippa ; " worse."

I looked round, not without a prevision of what I was to see, and beheld the faithful Maria swimming steadily after us, with her brown muzzle thrust out in front of her, ripping through the reflections like a plough.

" Go home ! " I roared, standing up and gesticulating in fury that I well knew to be impotent. " Go home, you brute ! "

Maria redoubled her efforts, and Philippa murmured uncontrollably:

' Well, she is a dear ! '

Had I had a sword in my hand I should undoubtedly have slain Philippa ; but before I could express my sentiments in any way, a violent shock flung me endways on top of the man who was pulling stroke. Thanks to Maria, we had reached our destination all unawares ; the two men, respectfully awaiting my instructions, had rowed on with disciplined steadiness, and, as a result, we had rammed the *Eileen Oge* amidships, with a vigour that brought Mr. Shute tumbling up the companion to see what had happened.

" Oh, it's you, is it ? " he said, with his mouth full. " Come in ; don't knock ! Delighted to see you, Mrs. Yeates ; don't apologise. There's nothing like a hired ship after all—it's quite jolly to see the splinters fly—shows you're getting your money's worth. Hullo ! who's this ? "

This was Maria, feigning exhaustion, and noisily treading water at the boat's side.

" What, poor old Maria ? Wanted to send her ashore, did he ? Heartless ruffian ! "

Thus was Maria installed on board the *Eileen Oge*, and the element of fatality had already begun to work.

There was just enough wind to take us out of Clountiss Harbour, and with the last of the out-running tide we crept away to the west. The party on board consisted of our host's sister, Miss Cecilia Shute, Miss Sally Knox, and ourselves ; we sat about in conventional attitudes in deck chairs and on adamantine deck bosses, and I talked to Miss Shute with feverish brilliancy, and wished the patience-cards were not in the cabin ; I knew the supreme importance of keeping one's mind occupied, but I dared not face the cabin. There was a long, almost imperceptible swell, with little queer sea-birds that I have never seen before—and trust I never shall again—dotted about on its glassy

slopes. The coast-line looked low and grey and dull, as, I think, coast-lines always do when viewed from the deep. The breeze that Bernard had promised us we should find outside was barely enough to keep us moving. The burning sun of four o'clock focussed its heat on the deck; Bernard stood up among us, engaged in what he was pleased to call "handling the stick," and beamed almost as offensively as the sun.

"Oh, we're slipping along," he said, his odiously healthy face glowing like copper against the blazing blue sky. "You're going a great deal faster than you think, and the men say we'll pick up a breeze once we're round the Mizen."

I made no reply; I was not feeling ill, merely thoroughly disinclined for conversation. Miss Sally smiled wanly, and closing her eyes, laid her head on Philippa's knee. Instructed by a dread freemasonry, I knew that for her the moment had come when she could no longer bear to see the rail rise slowly above the horizon, and with an equal rhythmic slowness sink below it. Maria moved restlessly to and fro, panting and yawning, and occasionally rearing herself on her hind-legs against the side, and staring forth with wild eyes at the headachy sliding of the swell. Perhaps she was meditating suicide; if so I sympathised with her, and since she was obviously going to be sick I trusted that she would bring off the suicide with as little delay as possible. Philippa and Miss Shute sat in unaffected serenity in deck chairs, and stitched at white things—tea-cloths for the *Eileen Oge*, I believe, things in themselves a mockery—and talked untiringly, with that singular indifference to their marine surroundings that I have often observed in ladies who are not sea-sick. It always stirs me afresh to wonder why they have not remained ashore; nevertheless, I prefer their tranquil and total lack of interest in seafaring matters to the blatant Vikingism of the average male who is similarly placed.

Somehow, I know not how, we crawled onwards, and by about five o'clock we had rounded the Mizen, a gaunt spike of a headland that starts up like a boar's tusk above the ragged lip of the Irish coast, and the *Eileen Oge* was beginning to swing and wallop in the long sluggish rollers that the American liners know and despise. I was very far from despising them. Down in the west, resting on the sea's rim, a purple bank of clouds lay awaiting the descent of the sun, as seductively and as malevolently as a damp bed at a hotel awaits a traveller.

The end, so far as I was concerned, came at tea-time. The meal had

been prepared in the saloon, and thither it became incumbent on me to accompany my hostess and my wife. Miss Sally, long past speech, opened, at the suggestion of tea, one eye, and disclosed a look of horror. As I tottered down the companion I respected her good sense. The *Eileen Oge* had been built early in the sixties, and head-room was not her strong point; neither, apparently, was ventilation. I began by dashing my forehead against the frame of the cabin door, and then, shattered morally and physically, entered into the atmosphere of the pit. After which things, and the sight of a plate of rich cake, I retired in good order to my cabin, and began upon the Yanatas.

I pass over some painful intermediate details and resume at the moment when Bernard Shute woke me from a drugged slumber to announce that dinner was over.

"It's been raining pretty hard," he said, swaying easily with the swing of the yacht; "but we've got a clinking breeze, and we ought to make Lurriga Harbour to-night. There's good anchorage there, the men say. They're rather a lot of swabs, but they know this coast, and I don't. I took 'em over with the ship all standing."

"Where are we now?" I asked, something heartened by the blessed word "anchorage."

"You're running up Sheepskin Bay—it's a thundering big bay; Lurriga's up at the far end of it, and the night's as black as the inside of a cow. Dig out and get something to eat, and come on deck—What! no dinner?"—I had spoken morosely, with closed eyes—"Oh, rot! you're on an even keel now. I promised Mrs. Yeates I'd make you dig out. You're as bad as a soldier officer that we were ferrying to Malta one time in the old *Tamar*. He got one leg out of his berth when we were going down the Channel, and he was too sick to pull it in again till we got to Gib!"

I compromised on a drink and some biscuits. The ship was certainly steadier, and I felt sufficiently restored to climb weakly on deck. It was by this time past ten o'clock, and heavy clouds blotted out the last of the afterglow, and smothered the stars at their birth. A wet warm wind was lashing the *Eileen Oge* up a wide estuary; the waves were hunting her, hissing under her stern, racing up to her, crested with the white glow of phosphorus, as she fled before them. I dimly discerned in the greyness the more solid greyness of the shore. The mainsail loomed out into the darkness, nearly at right angles to the yacht, with the boom creaking as the following wind gave us an additional shove.

I know nothing of yacht sailing, but I can appreciate the grand fact that in running before a wind the boom is removed from its usual sphere of devastation.

I sat down beside a bundle of rugs that I had discovered to be my wife, and thought of my whitewashed office at Shreelane and its bare but stationary floor, with a yearning that was little short of passion. Miss Sally had long since succumbed ; Miss Shute was tired, and had turned in soon after dinner.

" I suppose she's overdone by the delirious gaiety of the afternoon," said I acridly, in reply to this information.

Philippa cautiously poked forth her head from the rugs, like a tortoise from under its shell, to see that Bernard, who was standing near the steersman, was out of hearing.

" In all your life, Sinclair," she said impressively, " you never knew such a time as Cecilia and I have had down there ! We've had to wash *everything* in the cabins, and remake the beds, and *hurl* the sheets away—they were covered with black finger-marks—and while we were doing that, in came the creature that calls himself the steward, to ask if he might get something of his that he had left in Miss Shute's ' birth-place ' ! and he rooted out from under Cecilia's mattress a pair of socks and half a loaf of bread ! "

" Consolation to Miss Shute to know her berth has been well aired," I said, with the nearest approach to enjoyment I had known since I came on board ; " and has Sally made any equally interesting discoveries ? "

" She said she didn't care what her bed was like ; she just dropped into it. I must say I am sorry for her," went on Philippa ; " she hated coming. Her mother made her accept."

" I wonder if Lady Knox will make her accept *him* ! " I said. " How often has Sally refused him, does any one know ? "

" Oh, about once a week," replied Philippa ; " just the way I kept on refusing you, you know ! "

Something cold and wet was thrust into my hand, and the aroma of damp dog arose upon the night air ; Maria had issued from some lair at the sound of our voices, and was now, with palsied tremblings, slowly trying to drag herself on to my lap.

" Poor thing, she's been so dreadfully ill," said Philippa. " Don't send her away, Sinclair. Mr. Shute found her lying on his berth not able to move ; didn't you, Mr. Shute ? "

"She found out that she was able to move," said Bernard, who had crossed to our side of the deck; "it was somehow borne in upon her when I got at her with a boot-tree. I wouldn't advise you to keep her in your lap, Yeates. She stole half a ham after dinner, and she might take a notion to make the only reparation in her power."

I stood up and stretched myself stiffly. The wind was freshening, and though the growing smoothness of the water told that we were making shelter of some kind, for all that I could see of land we might as well have been in mid-ocean. The heaving lift of the deck under my feet, and the lurching swing when a stronger gust filled the ghostly sails, were more disquieting to me in suggestion than in reality, and, to my surprise, I found something almost enjoyable in rushing through darkness at the pace at which we were going.

"We're a small bit short of the mouth of Lurriga Harbour yet, sir," said the man who was steering, in reply to a question from Bernard. "I can see the shore well enough; sure I know every yard of wather in the bay——"

As he spoke he sat down abruptly and violently; so did Bernard, so did I. The bundle that contained Philippa collapsed upon Maria.

"Main sheet!" bellowed Bernard, on his feet in an instant, as the boom swung in and out again with a terrific jerk. "We're ashore!"

In response to this order three men in succession fell over me while I was still struggling on the deck, and something that was either Philippa's elbow, or the acutest angle of Maria's skull, hit me in the face. As I found my feet the cabin skylight was suddenly illuminated by a wavering glare. I got across the slanting deck somehow, through the confusion of shouting men and the flapping thunder of the sails, and saw through the skylight a gush of flame rising from a pool of fire around an overturned lamp on the swing-table. I avalanched down the companion and was squandered like an avalanche on the floor at the foot of it. Even as I fell, McCarthy the steward dragged the strip of carpet from the cabin floor and threw it on the blaze; I found myself, in some unexplained way, snatching a railway rug from Miss Shute and applying it to the same purpose, and in half-a-dozen seconds we had smothered the flame and were left in total darkness. The most striking feature of the situation was the immovability of the yacht.

"Great Ned!" said McCarthy, invoking I know not what heathen deity, "is it on the bottom of the say we are? Well, whether or no, thank God, we have the fire quinched!"

We were not, so far, at the bottom of the sea, but during the next ten minutes the chances seemed in favour of our getting there. The yacht had run her bows upon a sunken ridge of rock, and after a period of feminine indecision as to whether she were going to slide off again, or roll over into deep water, she elected to stay where she was, and the gig was lowered with all speed, in order to tow her off before the tide left her.

My recollection of this interval is but hazy, but I can certify that in ten minutes I had swept together an assortment of necessaries and knotted them into my counterpane, had broken the string of my eyeglass, and lost my silver matchbox ; had found Philippa's curling-tongs and put them in my pocket ; had carted all the luggage on deck ; had then applied myself to the manly duty of reassuring the ladies, and had found Miss Shute merely bored, Philippa enthusiastically anxious to be allowed to help to pull the gig, and Miss Sally radiantly restored to health and spirits by the cessation of movement and the probability of an early escape from the yacht.

The rain had, with its usual opportuneness, begun again ; we stood in it under umbrellas, and watched the gig jumping on its tow-rope like a dog on a string, as its crew plied the labouring oar in futile endeavour to move the *Eileen Oge*. We had run on the rock at half-tide, and the increasing slant of the deck as the tide fell brought home to us the pleasing probability that at low water—viz. about 2 A.M.—we should roll off the rock and go to the bottom. Had Bernard Shute wished to show himself in the most advantageous light to Miss Sally he could scarcely have bettered the situation. I looked on in helpless respect while he whom I had known as the scourge of the hunting-field, the terror of the shooting-party, rose to the top of a difficult position and kept there, and my respect was, if possible, increased by the presence of mind with which he availed himself of all critical moments to place a protecting arm round Miss Knox.

By about 1 A.M. the two gaffs with which Bernard had contrived to shore up the slowly heeling yacht began to show signs of yielding, and, in approved shipwreck fashion, we took to the boats, the yacht's crew in the gig remaining in attendance on what seemed likely to be the last moments of the *Eileen Oge*, while we, in the dinghy, sought for the harbour. Owing to the tilt of the yacht's deck, and the roughness of the broken water round her, getting into the boat was no mean feat of gymnastics. Miss Sally did it like a bird, alighting in the inevitable

arms of Bernard ; Miss Shute followed very badly, but, by innate force of character, successfully ; Philippa, who was enjoying every moment of her shipwreck, came last, launching herself into the dinghy with my silver shoe-horn clutched in one hand, and in the other the tea-basket. I heard the hollow clank of its tin cups as she sprang, and appreciated the heroism with which Bernard received one of its corners in his waist. How or when Maria left the yacht I know not, but when I applied myself to the bow oar I led off with three crabs, owing to the devotion with which she thrust her head into my lap.

I am no judge of these matters, but in my opinion we ought to have been swamped several times during that row. There was nothing but the phosphorus of breaking waves to tell us where the rocks were, and nothing to show where the harbour was except a solitary light, a mast-head light, as we supposed. The skipper had assured us that we could not go wrong if we kept " a westerly course with a little northing in it " ; but it seemed simpler to steer for the light, and we did so. The dinghy climbed along over the waves with an agility that was safer than it felt ; the rain fell without haste and without rest, the oars were as inflexible as crowbars, and somewhat resembled them in shape and weight ; nevertheless, it was Elysium when compared with the afternoon leisure of the deck of the *Eileen Oge*.

At last we came, unexplainably, into smooth water, and it was at about this time that we were first aware that the darkness was less dense than it had been, and that the rain had ceased. By imperceptible degrees a greyness touched the back of the waves, more a dreariness than a dawn, but more welcome than thousands of gold and silver. I looked over my shoulder and discerned vague bulky things ahead ; as I did so, my oar was suddenly wrapped in seaweed. We crept on ; Maria stood up with her paws on the gunwale, and whined in high agitation. The dark objects ahead resolved themselves into rocks, and without more ado Maria pitched herself into the water. In half a minute we heard her shaking herself on shore. We slid on ; the water swelled under the dinghy, and lifted her keel on to grating gravel.

" We couldn't have done it better if we'd been the Hydrographer Royal," said Bernard, wading knee-deep in a light wash of foam, with the painter in his hand ; " but all the same, that masthead light is some one's bedroom candle ! "

We landed, hauled up the boat, and then feebly sat down on our belongings to review the situation, and Maria came and shook herself

over each of us in turn. We had run into a little cove, guided by the philanthropic beam of a candle in the upper window of a house about a hundred yards away. The candle still burned on, and the anæmic daylight exhibited to us our surroundings, and we debated as to whether we could at 2.45 A.M. present ourselves as objects of compassion to the owner of the candle. I need hardly say that it was the ladies who decided on making the attempt, having, like most of their sex, a courage incomparably superior to ours in such matters ; Bernard and I had not a grain of genuine compunction in our souls, but we failed in nerve.

We trailed up from the cove, laden with emigrants' bundles, stumbling on wet rocks in the half-light, and succeeded in making our way to the house. It was a small two-storeyed building, of that hideous breed of architecture usually dedicated to the rectories of the Irish Church ; we felt that there was something friendly in the presence of a pair of carpet slippers in the porch, but there was a hint of exclusiveness in the fact that there was no knocker and that the bell was broken. The light still burned in the upper window, and with a faltering hand I flung gravel at the glass. This summons was appallingly responded to by a shriek ; there was a flutter of white at the panes, and the candle was extinguished.

" Come away ! " exclaimed Miss Shute, " it's a lunatic asylum ! "

We stood our ground, however, and presently heard a footstep within, a blind was poked aside in another window, and we were inspected by an unseen inmate ; then some one came downstairs, and the hall door was opened by a small man with a bald head and a long sandy beard. He was attired in a brief dressing-gown, and on his shoulder sat, like an angry ghost, a large white cockatoo. Its crest was up on end, its beak was a good two inches long and curved like a Malay kris ; its claws gripped the little man's shoulder. Maria uttered in the background a low and thunderous growl.

" Don't take any notice of the bird, please," said the little man nervously, seeing our united gaze fixed upon this apparition ; " he's extremely fierce if annoyed."

The majority of our party here melted away to either side of the hall door, and I was left to do the explaining. The tale of our misfortunes had its due effect, and we were ushered into a small drawing-room, our host holding open the door for us, like a nightmare footman with bare shins, a gnome-like bald head, and an unclean spirit swaying on his shoulder. He opened the shutters, and we sat decorously round the room, as at an afternoon party, while the situation was further

expounded on both sides. Our entertainer, indeed, favoured us with the leading items of his family history, amongst them the facts that he was a Dr. Fahy from Cork, who had taken somebody's rectory for the summer, and had been prevailed on by some of his patients to permit them to join him as paying-guests.

"I said it was a lunatic asylum," murmured Miss Shute to me.

"In point of fact," went on our host, "there isn't an empty room in the house, which is why I can only offer your party the use of this room and the kitchen fire, which I make a point of keeping burning all night."

He leaned back complacently in his chair, and crossed his legs; then, obviously remembering his costume, sat bolt upright again. We owed the guiding beams of the candle to the owner of the cockatoo, an old Mrs. Buck, who was, we gathered, the most paying of all the patients, and also, obviously, the one most feared and cherished by Dr. Fahy. "She has a candle burning all night for the bird, and her door open to let him walk about the house when he likes," said Dr. Fahy; "indeed, I may say her passion for him amounts to dementia. He's very fond of me, and Mrs. Fahy's always telling me I should be thankful, as whatever he did we'd be bound to put up with it!"

Dr. Fahy had evidently a turn for conversation that was unaffected by circumstance; the first beams of the early sun were lighting up the rep chair covers before the door closed upon his brown dressing-gown, and upon the stately white back of the cockatoo, and the demoniac possession of laughter that had wrought in us during the interview burst forth unchecked. It was most painful and exhausting, as such laughter always is; but by far the most serious part of it was that Miss Sally, who was sitting in the window, somehow drove her elbow through a pane of glass, and Bernard, in pulling down the blind to conceal the damage, tore it off the roller.

There followed on this catastrophe a period during which reason tottered and Maria barked furiously. Philippa was the first to pull herself together, and to suggest an adjournment to the kitchen fire that, in honour of the paying-guests, was never quenched, and, respecting the repose of the household, we proceeded thither with a stealth that convinced Maria we were engaged in a rat hunt. The boots of paying-guests littered the floor, the débris of their last repast covered the table; a cat in some unseen fastness crooned a war song to Maria, who feigned unconsciousness and fell to scientific research in the scullery.

We roasted our boots at the range, and Bernard, with all a sailor's gift for exploration and theft, prowled in noisome purlieus and emerged with a jug of milk and a lump of salt butter. No one who has not been a burglar can at all realise what it was to roam through Dr. Fahy's basement storey, with the rookery of paying-guests asleep above, and to feel that, so far, we had repaid his confidence by breaking a pane of glass and a blind, and putting the scullery tap out of order. I have always maintained that there was something wrong with it before I touched it, but the fact remains that when I had filled Philippa's kettle no human power could prevail upon it to stop flowing. For all I know to the contrary it is running still.

It was in the course of our furtive return to the drawing-room that we were again confronted by Mrs. Buck's cockatoo. It was standing in malign meditation on the stairs, and on seeing us it rose, without a word of warning, upon the wing, and with a long screech flung itself at Miss Sally's golden-red head, which a ray of sunlight had chanced to illumine. There was a moment of stampede, as the selected victim, pursued by the cockatoo, fled into the drawing-room; two chairs were upset (one, I think, broken), Miss Sally enveloped herself in a window curtain, Philippa and Miss Shute effaced themselves beneath a table; the cockatoo, foiled of its prey, skimmed, still screeching, round the ceiling. It was Bernard who, with a well-directed sofa-cushion, drove the enemy from the room. There was only a chink of the door open, but the cockatoo turned on his side as he flew, and swung through it like a woodcock.

We slammed the door behind him, and at the same instant there came a thumping on the floor overhead, muffled, yet peremptory.

"That's Mrs. Buck!" said Miss Shute, crawling from under the table; "the room over this is the one that had the candle in it."

We sat for a time in awful stillness, but nothing further happened, save a distant shriek overhead, that told the cockatoo had sought and found sanctuary in his owner's room. We had tea *sotto voce*, and then, one by one, despite the amazing discomfort of the drawing-room chairs, we dozed off to sleep.

It was at about five o'clock that I woke with a stiff neck and an uneasy remembrance that I had last seen Maria in the kitchen. The others looking, each of them, about twenty years older than their age ~~slant~~ in various attitudes of exhaustion. Bernard opened his eyes as I stole forth to look for Maria, but none of the ladies awoke. I went down the evil-smelling passage that led to the kitchen stairs,

and, there on a mat, regarding me with intelligent affection, was Maria ; but what—oh what was the white thing that lay between her forepaws ?

The situation was too serious to be coped with alone. I fled noiselessly back to the drawing-room and put my head in ; Bernard's eyes—blessed be the light sleep of sailors !—opened again, and there was that in mine that summoned him forth. (Blessed also be the light step of sailors !) We took the corpse from Maria, withholding perforce the language and the slaughtering that our hearts ached to bestow. For a minute or two our eyes communed. " I'll get the kitchen shovel," breathed Bernard ; " you open the hall door ! "

A moment later we passed like spirits into the open air, and on into a little garden at the end of the house. Maria followed us, licking her lips. There were beds of nasturtiums, and of purple stocks, and of marigolds. We chose a bed of stocks, a plump bed, that looked like easy digging. The windows were all tightly shut and shuttered, and I took the cockatoo from under my coat and hid it, temporarily, behind a box border. Bernard had brought a shovel and a coal scoop. We dug like badgers. At eighteen inches we got down into shale and stones, and the coal scoop struck work. " Never mind," said Bernard ; " we'll plant the stocks on top of him."

It was a lovely morning, with a new-born blue sky and a light northerly breeze. As we returned to the house, we looked across the wavelets of the little cove and saw, above the rocky point round which we had groped last night, a triangular white patch moving slowly along. " The tide's lifted her ! " said Bernard, standing stock still. He looked at Mrs. Buck's window and at me. " Yeates ! " he whispered, " let's quit ! "

It was now barely six o'clock, and not a soul was stirring. We woke the ladies and convinced them of the high importance of catching the tide. Bernard left a note on the hall table for Dr. Fahy, a beautiful note of leave-taking and gratitude, and apology for the broken window (for which he begged to enclose half-a-crown). No allusion was made to the other casualties. As we neared the strand he found an occasion to say to me : " I put in a postscript that I thought it best to mention that I had seen the cockatoo in the garden, and hoped it would get back all right. That's quite true, you know ! But look here, whatever you do, you must keep it all dark from the ladies——"

At this juncture Maria overtook us with the cockatoo in her mouth.

DANIEL CORKERY

THE BREATH OF LIFE

THE opera company which I had accompanied as first violinist on so many tours suddenly collapsing, I found myself rather unexpectedly out of an engagement. I communicated with my society, and after a day's delay I was ordered to go at once to Clonmoyle.

I was in the worst of humours. Clonmoyle I found was one of those places in Ireland which, instead of increasing in size and importance as places ought, seem to have become accustomed to doing the very opposite. Once a city, it was now but a straggling town. What had brought an opera company to try its fortunes there I could make no guess at, yet there it was, and with difficulties accumulating about it. Here was I myself, for instance, in Clonmoyle because the manager had found it impossible to supplement his scanty travelling orchestra with local players ; and several others as well as I had had to travel day and night to be in time for the opening performance. Only one local musician had been dug up ; and of him this story.

In everything he stood apart from us. He was old, well over sixty, however young in appearance. He was large and heavy in build, easy-going, ruminative. We, the others in the band, were rather meagre, high-strung, irritable, worried—as is the way of our tribe ; on this trip particularly so (consider my own case : a first-class violinist in such surroundings !). He, on the other hand, smiled the whole day long, and his voice whispered rather than spoke. It did not seem to trouble him that the old ramshackle theatre was mouldy, damp, foul-smelling. He did not seem to notice the cruel draughts that swept us while we played, and benumbed our fingers. It made no difference to him if the manager was in a vile temper over the receipts, and our conductor still worse, his rheumatism playing old Harry with him.

At our first rehearsal I discovered he could not play in tune. “ I'm in for it ! ” I said, for a week of such fellowship I knew only too well would leave me a wreck. And even as I said this I saw the conductor staring hard at where the two of us were sitting side by side ; was it possible he thought it was I who was playing like that ! He might

well have thought so, for my companion's face was not a guilty face ; how any one could play so consistently flat and still smile was a problem beyond me. Yes, Ignatius O'Byrne, such was his name, still smiled and still flattened. The fact is, he was the happiest man alive ; it was as if he had come into an inheritance. Here he was fiddling away in his beloved operas, and it was thirty years since he had last done so. These long thirty years, he explained to me in an interval, he had been rehearsing them in his untidy lodgings in a back street, and more than that, he had been thinking them out, phrase by phrase, " walking in the mists upon these rain-soaked hills "—I give his very words. As he spoke he swept his hand in a half-circle as if even there in the theatre he could still behold them, the dreary hills that surround Clonmoyle on every side and overlay it, as it were, with a sort of perpetual gloom. And then he added : " Behind music is the breath of life." A curious man, surely ; I watched his face. It was glowing, glowing, as long as the music held. And once when in some happy passage the whole band was singing like one, " Bravo, Bravo ! " I heard him whisper, and later on " Bravissimo ! " and he ceased playing, ceased, until I thought of nudging him with my elbow. And so, little by little, I came to forgive him his flat playing and his awkward bowing.

Our conductor, a brute of a man, his body twisted into a knot by rheumatism, was now constantly looking in our direction ; but whenever I saw him doing so I would make my violin sing for all it was worth ; were we not brothers in the same craft, this old man and I ? At rehearsal the second day my efforts to cover his wretched playing failed ; the conductor left his place, tied up and all as he was in that knot of pain, shuffled over to where we sat, and stood between us ! That settled for him which of us two was playing flat. He scowled at the old resurrected musician, hissed out a fierce, wicked word under his breath, and hobbled back to his place. That night, just to make matters worse, I suppose, old Byrne played altogether vilely ! He had scarce a phrase in tune. When the curtain fell he had to face a little tragic opera of his own—the tragedy of old age and failing powers. He took it all without a word. " The breath of life is behind music," he whispered to me as he came from the interview ; then he bent down, carefully wrapped his fiddle in a piece of baize cloth, put it in his case and made off.

The final explosion came at the rehearsal next day. He and I

were the first to arrive. The score of last night's opera, it was the "Marriage of Figaro," still lay on the conductor's stand. He turned the pages. They were pencilled all over with directions as to the tempos of the various movements. Along these pencillings old Byrne ran his finger. I could see he was having his revenge. I could see him lift his brows—just a little—as if he were amused, partly astonished. But no word escaped him. Soon the conductor came in and we began. We had not got far when we heard "Get out!" roared in a terrible voice, the voice of one who had not slept for several nights. The old man rose up, wrapped his baize cloth around his instrument, and moved between the chairs. As he went how still the house was, only a chair moving, and his own almost silent feet! And how we watched him! But when he got as far as the conductor's chair he paused, glanced once more at the open score, once again ran his finger along the pencillings, and laughed a tiny little laugh!

I felt his going more than I should care to tell. Will you believe me? I had told that old musician, that stranger, the whole story of the sorrows of my life. Yes, I told him things I had hardly ever made clear even to myself! And he replied: "Is it not behind music, the breath of life?" as if sorrow was there for the one purpose of being transmuted into sweet sound! I recalled his words as I went to my task that night.

And that night the extraordinary thing happened; our conductor failed to make an appearance: his rheumatism had conquered. There was then a call for our leader. He was found. Alas, he was not in a condition to conduct anything. He could scarcely stand. And he became quite cross about it; we had to leave him there in his corner, resining his bow like anything and scowling like mad. What between principals, chorus, and band, all thinking they stood a chance of losing a night's pay, and the manager flustering about like a whirlwind, our little den beneath the stage was deafening; I slipped quietly out into the house. There outside the rail was old Byrne! "What's the matter?" he whispered. As I told him, up came the manager.

"Mr. Melton," he said to me, "will you please take the baton to-night?"

A very flattering compliment, indeed, and I should have taken that baton if our band did not happen to be the scraggiest ever scraped together from the ends of the earth; our leader was in the condition I have mentioned. As we spoke I saw the players getting into their

places, a tempting sight, yet still I hesitated, foreseeing collapse and ignominy.

"It is not possible," I began, but over the rail old Byrne was climbing like a boy. He had clutched the baton from the manager's hand. He had leaped into the conductor's chair. He gave but one glance to the right, to the left. "Now, boys," he said, and at the words we swam, sank, buried ourselves in the rich, broad, gentle strains of the overture to "Faust." Some wide gesture he had used, some thrill in his tone had bidden us to do so—to lose ourselves in the soul of the music. At the first chord we had got within the skin of it, as the saying is. And never was the mood broken; every progression told, and not a colour tone was faulty or blurred. That memorable waltz, which use has almost spoiled, he made a new thing of it—we were all spirits in thin air, so lightly it went. But our triumph was the tremendous trio at the close. The old man stood up to it, hiding the stage from a large sector of the house. What did he care! We felt his huge shabby figure above us as a darkness, a vastness of great potency. It commanded stage, orchestra, house, with a strong yet benign power. The voices, tenor, soprano, bass—all the instruments, strings, brass, wood, drums, the very shell of the old house itself, became as one instrument and sang the great strain with such strength and perfection that some of us trembled lest we should fall down with excitement and spoil everything.

"Oh!" we all sighed when it was over. For such moments does the artist live. I was so glad I had told him the story of my sorrows!

Now, sir, around Clonmoyle, as I have said, is a rampart of dark hills, bleak and rain-sodden, treeless and desolate. Why do I again mention them? "Wherever did you learn to conduct?" I asked him, as we made for our lodgings.

"There!" he answered, and his outstretched hand gestured around the deserted hills, "behind music we must get at the breath of life." Bare, wind-swept hills!—curious place to find out the secrets of life! Or what did he mean by "Life"? It cannot be that the breath of life that is behind all great music is the sigh of loneliness?

"And you took him with the company?"

"No, sir; an opera company, like any other company, must pay its way."

THE CHILD SAINT

DANIEL CORKERY

THE people in the same lodging-house sometimes spoke of him as The Child: at other times they called him The Saint. One name was as apt as the other; in spite of the squalid environment in which he lived, he was a saint; in spite of his age, a child. His hair was scanty, wispy, tow-like, and the scalp, not too clean, showed through it. His knees were bent. He walked with his back almost parallel with the ground, his spine long since having suffered injury. From that awkward posture his eyes stared up at you, full of light, smiling, brave with innocence. In spite of his hand's heavy clutch on its knob his stick was always trembling; the fact reminded you of his age when his brave eyes would have deceived you.

His room was filled with objects of devotion; of other furniture there was little or none. He had several pictures of the Blessed Virgin, a few of the Holy Family, many of the better-known saints—St. Patrick, St. Joseph, St. Anthony. He had several statues, besides a bottle of Lourdes water, and of Holy Water he kept a small supply in a little chinaware font which a chinaware angel, kneeling, upheld. Among these, his treasures, he lived alone in quiet ecstasy, speaking much to himself—perhaps to them, too, on occasions.

He knew that the Phelan family, they lived on a lower landing, were in trouble. His hand catching his door, he listened to the rent-collector's voice growing louder, angrier; then he heard him begin to pound his stick on the stairs; so sure as he did that a notice-to-quit would follow. The Child began to scramble down the stairs to the rescue. "My," "My," "My," he repeated as he made from step to step.

"Give her till to-morrow, give her till to-morrow," he cried, when he had come into view of the little group; and as he flopped down he continued to call out, "Give her till to-morrow."

"'Tis too long I'm after giving her, I'm pestered with her."

"Give her wan last chance, 'twill be paid to-morrow."

"At this time to-morrow?"

" Yes, at this time to-morrow ; or say in the evening, at seven ; give us the whole day ? "

The agent put his book in his breast-pocket, stooped his head, and piloted himself down the crazy, box-like stairs. He trusted The Child to come at the rent for Mrs. Phelan, it didn't matter to him how, so long as he got it.

Meanwhile The Child refused to tell Mrs. Phelan how he meant to relieve her ; no, he wouldn't tell her, but she need have no fear, he'd be there to-morrow to meet the Man, as they called the rent-collector. With this she had to be satisfied. She tightened her shawl about the white-faced babe on her arm, and was soon in the midst of the traffic spiritlessly singing, " The Rocks of Bawn." A hardened beggar-woman, who would believe her story of the notice-to-quit ? She didn't bother telling it.

When she had started on her rounds, The Child took up his china-ware angel, and having emptied the Holy Water into a bottle, dusted the figure and put it into his beggarman's bag ; the shining head of golden curls looked out over the edge. Then he mounted up on his rickety bed and took down one of his loveliest pictures. In it the Blessed Virgin was seated on a Renaissance throne, behind her an Italian-blue sky and hosts of golden stars. He cleaned off the dust and laid the picture flat on the bed. Into the great tail-pocket of his coat he put a small painted plaster statue of St. Anthony. Then he came back to his picture on the bed, looked at it, gave it a last rub, caught it up, and with great difficulty made down the narrow stairs. His beggar's bag he had also with him, the shining angel peeping from it.

Earnestly he shuffled his way to where Mrs. McCarthy was selling bedsteads, stools, and " altars " on the Coal Quay—the open-air market-place in that city. She undertook to sell his wares, he sitting by on one of her stools, his two hands on the knob of his stick. He knew she would make more on them than he would get in any pawn-office.

The chinaware angel was the first to go. In the bartering the old man took no part, but just as the purchaser—a hale, soft-featured woman—was moving off, he said :

" Pardon me for making so bold, ma'am ; but might you be living in Blarney Lane ? "

He thought she looked like a woman from Blarney Lane.

"No, then," she answered, "I'm from the South Side."

"Ah," he murmured, "Evergreen, maybe?"

"No, Gunpowder Lane, if you know where that is?"

"I do then—Gunpowder Lane—well, well."

The purchaser went off, her bargain under her shawl. The picture being large, and judging by its look, expensive, took a lot of selling. A half-crown is big money on the Coal Quay, yet this Mrs. McCarthy fixed as the price. Several people examined it, and at each chance Mrs. McCarthy would take it up on her lap, stand it on an angle, wipe it with her apron, and call it a handsome piece. She succeeded in selling it to a young mother.

"I can't afford it," she said, "and I can't leave it after me—that's how it is."

"'Tis a blessing you're taking into your house," said Mrs. McCarthy. Then the old man raised his eyes:

"If I'm not making too bold, are you the young woman that keeps the shop in Windmill Road?"

"I never had a shop, sir," she answered.

"Do you live in Windmill Road?"

"No."

"Nor in Gunpowder Lane?"

"No." She was looking at him with large, shining eyes.

"Do you live in the South Side at all?"

"No—'tis on the Rock Steps I live."

"The Rock Steps—well, well—that's not too far—well, well, look at that, and I thinking you were from the South Side."

Going from them she looked questioningly at Mrs. McCarthy; perhaps she had doubts of the old man's sanity.

It was just six o'clock when a very old woman bought the St. Anthony. As she was bargaining for it, the Angelus rang, and this, perhaps, made her give the full penny asked. She lived in Pouladuff.

"My, my," said The Child, "what a long way off, what a long way off."

He rose from his stool.

"What do you want to know where the people live for?" Mrs. McCarthy questioned him.

"Wouldn't I like to be thinking of where they are? Hadn't I that picture before my eyes for the last forty years? Will it be easy for me to live without thinking of it?"

Hobbling homewards, he repeated his lesson over and over again : The Angel in Gunpowder Lane, Holy Mother in a house on the Rock Steps, St. Anthony in Pouladuff.

The next day, he paid the rent for Mrs. Phelan. Straightway then he began to save up his odd pence and halfpence to buy back his treasures. There was a vacant space on his mantelpiece, another on his window-sill (how lovely the painted statue used to look there among the green-leaved geraniums when the sun shone in !) ; the worst gap of all, however, was the huge space of clean wall-paper where the picture had hung. Because of these blank spaces, the room looked upset, unfurnished. But he was a saint as well as a child ; somehow his savings, pinch as he would, refused to mount up. The fact is, money would burn a hole in his pocket. How could he keep a grip on it if he saw a blind man's hand stretched out to the callous passers-by, or a hungry-looking boy staring in at a shop window ?

Again and again he had to begin anew. One night in bed he reckoned up with some excitement that twelve months would soon have gone by. And, as luck had it, a few days afterwards he chanced to hear a powerful sermon on the precious ointment that Magdalen had poured upon our Lord's feet, "wasting money that might be devoted to charity," as the preacher said, throwing great scorn on the wisdom of the world into his enunciation of these words. Yes, the old man felt all that sermon come home to him, every phrase. Cost what it would, the end of the twelve months would see him with all his treasures gathered and housed once more within his attic under the slates.

On the anniversary of the sale he rose quite early, heard Mass, and set off in much uncertainty to gather his treasures. He almost fell down when it suddenly struck him that they might have frequently changed owners since his parting with them, and that he might after all never gather them together again.

He came in and went up the stairs at one o'clock in the day.

"Mrs. Mehigan ! " he called, as he passed her door (she was an old bed-ridden woman).

"Yes, what is it ? "

"I have wan of them—the angel."

At five o'clock he passed up again.

"Mrs. Mehigan ! Mrs. Mehigan ! "

"Yes."

"I've another—St. Anthony."

He passed up a third time ; it was now about eight o'clock. He didn't speak. Mrs. Mehigan listened to his steps, how tired he seemed, going up to his room ! She called out :

"Have you the last wan ?"

"No." She thought 'twas a gasp ; by way of sympathy she said :
"Oh, dear."

"But I'm on the track of it," he answered quite brightly. He went out again.

The whole house was dark, its many inhabitants snoring when he was heard struggling up the stairs once more, almost as a drunken man would, falling from side to side, and missing his steps, it seemed.

The next morning Mrs. Phelan came into Mrs. Mehigan's room. She believed, she said, the Saint hadn't got the last one after all. Mrs. Mehigan answered that God was good. "Go up and see," she said. Mrs. Phelan went up, knocked, and got no reply. She came back to Mrs. Mehigan.

"He's fast asleep ; I didn't knock very loud, I only tapped at the door ; 'tis how he's exhausted entirely."

"I'm sure he had something in his arms, he nearly fell against that door as he went up."

After some time Mrs. Phelan was sent up again. Mrs. Mehigan heard her knocking once, twice, thrice. Then she came down, as white as a sheet.

"Go out for Father Maher, child," said Mrs. Mehigan.

They found the Saint sitting on the floor, an unfinished bowl of bread and milk between his legs ; opposite his now-cold eyes was his Renaissance Madonna, it stood propped against the edge of the bed ; guarding it on the right was St. Anthony, on the left the chinaware angel, its font full of holy water. The candle that had lighted his treasures for him had burnt out. Mrs. Phelan says when first she entered the room there was the smell of lovely flowers. Mrs. Mehigan says she heard far-away singing in the dead of night. In any case it is pleasant to think how sweet the old man's thoughts must have been as his eyes began to close for ever. Not far-away music nor newly-gathered flowers would be so sweet.

LORD DUNSANY

B. 1878

THE CITY ON MALLINGTON MOOR

BESIDES the old shepherd at Langside, whose habits render him unreliable, I am probably the only person that has ever seen the city on Mallington Moor.

I had decided one year to do no London season, partly because of the ugliness of the things in the shops, partly because of the unresisted invasion of German bands, partly perhaps because some pet parrots in the oblong where I lived had learned to imitate cab-whistles, but chiefly because of late there had seized me in London a quite unreasonable longing for large woods and waste spaces, while the very thought of little valleys underneath copses full of bracken and fox-gloves was a torment to me, and every summer in London the longing grew worse till the thing was becoming intolerable. So I took a stick and a knapsack and began walking northwards, starting at Tetherington and sleeping at inns, where one could get real salt and the waiter spoke English, and where one had a name instead of a number; and though the tablecloth might be dirty, the windows opened so that the air was clean; where one had the excellent company of farmers and men of the wold, who could not be thoroughly vulgar because they had not the money to be so even if they had wished it. At first the novelty was delightful, and then one day in a queer old inn up Uthering way beyond Langside I heard for the first time the rumour of the city said to be on Mallington Moor. They spoke of it quite casually over their glasses of beer, two farmers at the inn. "They say the queer folk be at Mallington with their city," one farmer said. "Travelling they seem to be," said the other. And more came in then and the rumour spread. And then, such are the contradictions of our little likes and dislikes and all the whims that drive us, that I who had come so far to avoid cities had a great longing all of a sudden for throngs again and the great hives of Man, and then and there determined on that bright Sunday morning to come to Mallington and there search for the city that rumour spoke of so strangely.

Mallington Moor from all that they said of it was hardly a likely

place to find a thing by searching. It was a huge high moor, very bleak and desolate, and altogether trackless. It seemed a lonely place from what they said. The Normans when they came had called it Mal Lieu, and afterwards Mallieutown, and so it changed to Mallington. Though what a town can ever have had to do with a place so utterly desolate I do not know. And before that some say that the Saxons called it Baplas, which I believe to be a corruption of Bad Place.

And beyond the mere rumour of a beautiful city all of white marble and with a foreign look up on Mallington Moor, beyond this I could not get. None of them had seen it themselves, "only heard of it like," and my questions, rather than stimulating conversation, would always stop it abruptly. I was no more fortunate on the road to Mallington, until the Tuesday when I was quite near it; I had been walking two days from the inn where I had heard the rumour and could see the great hill, steep as a headland, on which Mallington lay, standing up on the skyline; the hill was covered with grass, where anything grew at all, but Mallington Moor is all heather; it is just marked Moor on the map; nobody goes there and they do not trouble to name it. It was there where the gaunt hill first came into sight, by the roadside as I inquired for the marble city of some labourers by the way, that I was directed, partly, I think, in derision, to the old shepherd of Langside. It appeared that he following sometimes sheep that had strayed, and wandering far from Langside, came sometimes up to the edge of Mallington Moor, and that he would come back from these excursions and shout through the villages, raving of a city of white marble and gold-tipped minarets. And hearing me asking questions of this city they had laughed and directed me to the shepherd of Langside. One well-meant warning they gave me as I went—the old man was not reliable.

And late that evening I saw the thatches of Langside sheltering under the edge of that huge hill that Atlas-like held up those miles of moor to the great winds and heaven.

They knew less of the city in Langside than elsewhere, but they knew the whereabouts of the man I wanted, though they seemed a little ashamed of him. There was an inn in Langside that gave me shelter, whence in the morning, equipped with purchases, I set out to find their shepherd. And there he was on the edge of Mallington Moor standing motionless, gazing stupidly at his sheep; his hands trembled

continually and his eyes had a bleary look, but he was quite sober, wherein all Langside had wronged him.

And then and there I asked him of the city, and he said he had never heard tell of any such place. And I said, "Come, come, you must pull yourself together." And he looked angrily at me; but when he saw me draw from amongst my purchases a full bottle of whisky and a big glass he became more friendly. As I poured out the whisky I asked him again about the marble city on Mallington Moor, but he seemed quite honestly to know nothing about it. The amount of whisky he drank was quite incredible, but I seldom express surprise, and once more I asked him the way to the wonderful city. His hand was steadier now and his eyes more intelligent, and he said that he had heard something of some such city, but his memory was evidently blurred and he was still unable to give me useful directions. I consequently gave him another tumbler, which he drank off like the first without any water, and almost at once he was a different man. The trembling in his hands stopped altogether, his eye became as quick as a younger man's, he answered my questions readily and frankly, and, what was more important to me still, his old memory became alert and clear for even minutest details. His gratitude to myself I need not mention, for I make no pretence that I bought the bottle of whisky that the old shepherd enjoyed so much, without at least some thought of my own advantage. Yet it was pleasant to reflect that it was due to me that he pulled himself together and steadied his shaking hand and cleared his mind, recovered his memory and his self-respect. He spoke to me quite clearly, no longer slurring his words; he had seen the city first one moonlight night when he was lost in the mist on the big moor; he had wandered far in the mist, and when it lifted he saw the city by moonlight. He had no food, but luckily had his flask. There never was such a city, not even in books. Travellers talked sometimes of Venice seen from the sea; there might be such a place or there might not, but, whether or no, it was nothing to the city on Mallington Moor. Men who read books and talked to him in his time, hundreds of books, but they never could tell of any city like this. Why the place was all of marble, roads, walls, and palaces, all pure white marble, and the tops of the tall thin spires were entirely of gold. And they were queer folk in the city, even for foreigners. And there were camels—but I cut him short, for I thought I could judge for myself, if there was such a place, and, if not, I was wasting my time

as well as a pint of good whisky. So I got him to speak of the way, and after more circumlocution than I needed and more talk of the city he pointed to a tiny track on the black earth just beside us, a little twisty way you could hardly see.

I said the moor was trackless ; untrodden of man or dog it certainly was and seemed to have less to do with the ways of man than any waste I have seen, but the track the old shepherd showed me, if track it was, was no more than the track of a hare—an elf-path the old man called it, Heaven knows what he meant.

And then before I left him he insisted on giving me his flask with the queer strong rum it contained. Whisky brings out in some men melancholy, in some rejoicing, with him it was clearly generosity, and he insisted until I took his rum though I did not mean to drink it. It was lonely up there, he said, and bitter cold, and the city hard to find, being set in a hollow, and I should need the rum, and he had never seen the marble city except on days when he had had his flask. He seemed to regard that rusted iron flask as a sort of mascot, and in the end I took it.

I followed that odd, faint track on the black earth under the heather till I came to the big grey stone beyond the horizon where the track divides into two, and I took the one to the left as the old man told me. I knew by another stone that I saw far off that I had not lost my way nor the old man lied.

And just as I hoped to see the city's ramparts before the gloaming fell on that desolate place I suddenly saw a long high wall of whiteness with pinnacles here and there thrown up above it, floating towards me silent and grim as a secret, and knew it for that evil thing the mist. The sun, though low, was shining on every sprig of heather, the green and scarlet mosses were shining with it too ; it seemed incredible that in three minutes' time all those colours would be gone and nothing left all round but a grey darkness. I gave up hope of finding the city that day, a broader path than mine could have been easily lost. I hastily chose for my bed a thick patch of heather, wrapped myself in a waterproof cloak, and lay down and made myself comfortable. And then the mist came. It came like the careful pulling of lace curtains, then like the drawing of grey blinds ; it shut out the horizon to the north, then to the east and west ; it turned the whole sky white and hid the moor ; it came down on it like a metropolis, only utterly silent, silent and white as tombstones.

And then I was glad of that strange strong rum, or whatever it was in the flask that the shepherd gave me : for I did not think that the mist would clear till night, and I feared the night would be cold. So I nearly emptied the flask ; and sooner than I expected I fell asleep, for the first night out as a rule one does not sleep at once but is kept awake some while by the little winds and the unfamiliar sound of the things that wander at night and that cry to one another far off with their queer faint voices ; one misses them afterwards when one gets to houses again. But I heard none of these sounds in the mist that evening.

And then I woke and found that the mist was gone and the sun was just disappearing under the moor, and I knew that I had not slept for as long as I thought. And I decided to go on while I could, for I thought that I was not very far from the city.

I went on and on along the twisty track, bits of the mist came down and filled the hollows but lifted again at once so that I saw my way. The twilight faded as I went, a star appeared, and I was able to see the track no longer. I could go no farther that night, yet before I lay down to sleep I decided to go and look over the edge of a wide depression in the moor that I saw a little way off. So I left the track and walked a few hundred yards, and when I got to the edge the hollow was full of mist all white underneath me. Another star appeared and a cold wind arose, and with the wind the mist flapped away like a curtain. And there was the city.

Nothing the shepherd had said was the least untrue or even exaggerated. The poor old man had told the simple truth, there is not a city like it in the world. What he had called thin spires were minarets, but the little domes on the top were clearly pure gold, as he said. There were the marble terraces he described, and the pure white palaces covered with carving, and hundreds of minarets. The city was obviously of the East, and yet where there should have been crescents on the domes of the minarets there were golden suns with rays, and wherever one looked one saw things that obscured its origin. I walked down to it and, passing through a wicket gate of gold in a low wall of white marble, I entered the city. The heather went right up to the city's edge and beat against the marble wall whenever the wind blew it. Lights began to twinkle from high windows of blue glass ; as I walked up the white street, beautiful copper lanterns were lit up and let down from balconies by silver chains ; from doors ajar

came the sound of voices singing, and then I saw the men. Their faces were rather grey than black, and they wore beautiful robes of coloured silk with hems embroidered with gold and some with copper. And sometimes pacing down the marble ways with golden baskets hung on each side of them I saw the camels of which the old shepherd spoke.

The people had kindly faces, but though they were evidently friendly to strangers I could not speak with them, being ignorant of their language, nor were the sounds of the syllables they used like any language I had ever heard, they sounded more like grouse.

When I tried to ask them by signs whence they had come with their city they would only point to the moon, which was bright and full and was shining fiercely on those marble ways till the city danced in light. And now there began appearing one by one, stepping softly out through the windows, men with stringed instruments in the balconies. They were strange instruments with huge bulbs of wood and they played softly on them and very beautifully, and their queer voices softly sang to the music weird dirges of the griefs of their native land wherever that may be. And far off in the heart of the city others were singing too ; the sound of it came to me wherever I roamed, not loud enough to disturb my thoughts, but gently turning the mind to pleasant things. Slender carved arches of marble as delicate almost as lace crossed and re-crossed the ways wherever I went. There was none of that hurry of which foolish cities boast, nothing ugly or sordid so far as I could see. I saw that it was a city of beauty and song. I wondered how they had travelled with all that marble, how they had laid it down on Mallington Moor, whence they had come and what their resources were, and determined to investigate closely next morning, for the old shepherd had not troubled his head to think how the city came, he had only noted that the city was there (and of course no one believed him, though that is partly his fault for his dissolute ways). But at night one can see little and I had walked all day, so I determined to find a place to rest in. And just as I was wondering whether to ask for shelter of those silk-robed men by signs, or whether to sleep outside the walls and enter again in the morning, I came to a great archway in one of the marble houses with two black curtains, embroidered below with gold, hanging across it. Over the archway were carved apparently in many tongues the words : " Here strangers rest." In Greek, Latin, and Spanish the sentence was repeated, and there was writing also in the language that you see on the walls of the

great temples of Egypt, and Arabic, and what I took to be early Assyrian, and one or two languages I had never seen. I entered through the curtains, and found a tessellated marble court with golden braziers burning sleepy incense swinging by chains from the roof; all round the walls were comfortable mattresses lying upon the floor, covered with cloths and silks. It must have been ten o'clock and I was tired. Outside the music still softly filled the streets, a man had set a lantern down on the marble way, five or six sat down round him and he was sonorously telling them a story. Inside there were some already asleep on the beds; in the middle of the wide court under the braziers a woman dressed in blue was singing very gently; she did not move, but sung on and on, I never heard a song that was so soothing. I lay down on one of the mattresses by the wall, which was all inlaid with mosaics, and pulled over me some of the clothes with their beautiful alien work, and almost immediately my thoughts seemed part of the song that the woman was singing in the midst of the court under the golden braziers that hung from the high roof, and the song turned them to dreams and so I fell asleep.

A small wind having arisen I was awakened by a sprig of heather that beat continually against my face. It was morning on Mallington Moor and the city was quite gone.

CORONATION OF MR. THOMAS SHAP

LORD DUNSANY

IT was the occupation of Mr. Thomas Shap to persuade customers that the goods were genuine and of an excellent quality, and that as regards the price their unspoken will was consulted. And in order to carry on this occupation he went by train very early every morning to the city from the suburb in which he slept. This was the use to which he put his life.

From the moment when he first perceived (not as one reads a thing in a book, but as truths are revealed to one's instinct) the very beastliness of his occupation, and of the house that he slept in, its shape, make and pretensions, and of even the clothes that he wore; from that moment he withdrew his dreams from it, his fancies, his ambitions, everything in fact except that ponderable Mr. Shap that dressed in a frock-coat, bought tickets and handled money and could in turn be handled by the statistician. The priest's share in Mr. Shap, the share of the poet, never caught the early train to the city at all.

He used to take little flights with his fancy at first, dwelt all day in his dreamy way on fields and rivers lying in the sunlight where it strikes the world more brilliantly farther south. And then he began to imagine butterflies there; after that, silken people and the temples they built to their gods.

They noticed that he was silent, and even absent at times, but they found no fault with his behaviour with customers, to whom he remained as plausible as of old. So he dreamed for a year, and his fancy gained strength as he dreamed.

He still read halfpenny papers, in the train, still discussed the passing day's ephemeral topic, still voted at elections, though he no longer did these things with the whole Shap—his soul was no longer in them.

He had had a pleasant year; his imagination was all new to him still, and it had often discovered beautiful things away where it went, south-east at the edge of the twilight. And he had a matter-of-fact and logical mind, so that he often said, "Why should I pay my twopence at the electric theatre when I can see all sorts of things quite

easily without ? ” Whatever he did was logical before anything else, and those that knew him always spoke of Shap as “ a sound, sane, level-headed man.”

On far the most important day of his life he went as usual to town by the early train to sell plausible articles to customers, while the spiritual Shap roamed off to fanciful lands. As he walked from the station, dreamy but wide awake, it suddenly struck him that the real Shap was not the one walking to Business in black and ugly clothes, but he who roamed along a jungle’s edge near the ramparts of an old and Eastern city that rose up sheer from the sand, and against which the desert lapped with one eternal wave. He used to fancy the name of that city was Larkar.

“ After all, the fancy is as real as the body,” he said, with perfect logic. It was a dangerous theory.

For that other life that he led he realised, as in Business, the importance and value of method. He did not let his fancy roam too far, until it perfectly knew its first surroundings. Particularly he avoided the jungle—he was not afraid to meet a tiger there (after all it was not real), but stranger things might crouch there.

Slowly he built up Larkar : rampart by rampart, towers for archers, gateway of brass, and all. And then one day he argued, and quite rightly, that all the silk-clad people in its streets, their camels, their wares that came from Inkustahn, the city itself, were all the things of his will—and then he made himself King.

He smiled after that when people did not raise their hats to him in the street, as he walked from the station to Business ; but he was sufficiently practical to recognise that it was better not to talk of this to those that only knew him as Mr. Shap.

Now that he was King in the city of Larkar and in all the desert that lay to the east and north, he sent his fancy to wander farther afield. He took the regiments of his camel-guard and went jingling out of Larkar, with little silver belis under the camels’ chins, and came to other cities far-off on the yellow sand, with clear white walls and towers, uplifting themselves in the sun. Through their gates he passed with his three silken regiments, the light-blue regiment of the camel-guard being upon his right and the green regiment riding at his left, the lilac regiment going on before. When he had gone through the streets of any city and observed the ways of its people, and had seen the way that the sunlight struck its towers, he would proclaim himself

King there, and then ride on in fancy. So he passed from city to city and from land to land.

Clear-sighted though Mr. Shap was, I think he overlooked the lust of aggrandisement to which kings have so often been victims : and so it was that when the first few cities had opened their gleaming gates and he saw peoples prostrate before his camel, and spearmen cheering along countless balconies, and priests come out to do him reverence, he that had never had even the lowliest authority in the familiar world became unwisely insatiate. He let his fancy ride at inordinate speed ; he forsook method ; scarce was he king of a land but he yearned to extend his borders ; so he journeyed deeper and deeper into the wholly unknown.

The concentration that he gave to this inordinate progress through countries of which history is ignorant and cities so fantastic in their bulwarks that, though their inhabitants were human, yet the foe that they feared seemed something less or more ; the amazement with which he beheld gates and towers unknown even to art, and furtive people thronging intricate ways to acclaim him as their sovereign : all these things began to affect his capacity for Business. He knew as well as any that his fancy could not rule these beautiful lands unless that other Shap, however unimportant, were sheltered and fed : and shelter and food meant money, and money, Business. His was more like the mistake of some gambler with cunning schemes who overlooks human greed.

One day his fancy, riding in the morning, came to a city gorgeous as the sunrise, in whose opalescent wall were gates of gold, so huge that a river poured between the bars, floating in, when the gates were opened, large galleons under sail. Thence there came dancing out a company with instruments, and made a melody all round the wall ; that morning Mr. Shap, the bodily Shap in London, forgot the train to town. Until a year ago he had never imagined at all ; it is not to be wondered at that all these things now newly seen by his fancy should play tricks at first with the memory of even so sane a man. He gave up reading the papers altogether, he lost all interest in politics, he cared less and less for things that were going on around him.

This unfortunate missing of the morning train even occurred again, and the firm spoke to him severely about it. But he had his consolation. Were not Aráthrion and Argun Zeerith and all the level coasts of Oora his ? And even as the firm found fault with him, his fancy

watched the yaks on weary journeys, slow specks against the snow-fields, bringing tribute ; and saw the green eyes of the mountain men who had looked at him strangely in the city of Nith when he had entered it by the desert door.

Yet his logic did not forsake him ; he knew well that his strange subjects did not exist, but he was prouder of having created them with his brain, than merely of ruling them only ; thus in his pride he felt himself something more great than a king, he did not dare to think what ! He went into the temple of the city of Zorra and stood some time there, alone : all the priests kneeled to him when he came away.

He cared less and less for the things we care about, for the affairs of Shap, a business-man in London. He began to despise the man with a royal contempt. One day when he sat in Sowla, the city of the Thuls, throned on one amethyst, he decided, and it was proclaimed on the moment by silver trumpets all along the land, that he would be crowned as king over all the lands of Wonder.

By that old temple where the Thuls were worshipped, year in, year out, for over a thousand years, they pitched pavilions in the open air. The trees that blew there threw out radiant scents unknown in any countries that know the map ; the stars blazed fiercely for that famous occasion. A fountain hurled up, clattering, ceaselessly into the air armfuls on armfuls of diamonds ; a deep hush waited for the golden trumpets ; the holy coronation night was come.

At the top of those old, worn steps, going down we know not whither, stood the king in the emerald-and-amethyst cloak, the ancient garb of the Thuls ; beside him lay that Sphinx that for the last few weeks had advised him in his affairs. Slowly, with music when the trumpets sounded, came up towards him from we know not where, one-hundred-and-twenty archbishops, twenty angels and two arch-angels, with that terrific crown, the diadem of the Thuls. They knew as they came up to him that promotion awaited them all because of this night's work. Silent, majestic, the king awaited them.

The doctors downstairs were sitting over their supper, the warders softly slipped from room to room, and when in that cosy dormitory of Hanwell they saw the king still standing erect and royal, his face resolute, they came up to him and addressed him : " Go to bed," they said—" pretty bed."

So he lay down and soon was fast asleep : the great day was over.

THE SWORD AND THE IDOL

LORD DUNSANY

IT was a cold winter's evening late in the Stone Age ; the sun had gone down blazing over the plains of Thold ; there were no clouds, only the chill blue sky and the imminence of stars ; and the surface of the sleeping Earth began to harden against the cold of the night. Presently from their lairs arose, and shook themselves and went stealthily forth, those of Earth's children to whom it is the law to prowl abroad as soon as the dusk has fallen. And they went pattering softly over the plain, and their eyes shone in the dark, and crossed and re-crossed one another on their courses. Suddenly there became manifest in the midst of the plain that fearful portent of the presence of Man—a little flickering fire. And the children of Earth who prowl abroad by night looked sideways at it and snarled and edged away ; all but the wolves, who came a little nearer, for it was winter and the wolves were hungry, and they had come in thousands from the mountains, and they said in their hearts, " We are strong." Around the fire a little tribe was encamped. They, too, had come from the mountains, and from lands beyond them, but it was in the mountains that the wolves first winded them ; they picked up bones at first that the tribe had dropped, but they were closer now and on all sides. It was Loz who had lit the fire. He had killed a small furry beast, hurling his stone axe at it, and had gathered a quantity of reddish brown stones, and had laid them in a long row, and placed bits of the small beast all along it ; then he lit a fire on each side, and the stones heated, and the bits began to cook. It was at this time that the tribe noticed that the wolves who had followed them so far were no longer content with the scraps of deserted encampments. A line of yellow eyes surrounded them, and when it moved it was to come nearer. So the men of the tribe hastily tore up brushwood, and felled a small tree with their flint axes, and heaped it all over the fire that Loz had made, and for a while the great heap hid the flame, and the wolves came trotting in and sat down again on their haunches much closer than before ; and the fierce and valiant dogs that belonged to the tribe believed that their end was

about to come while fighting, as they had long since prophesied it would. Then the flame caught the lofty stack of brushwood, and rushed out of it, and ran up the side of it, and stood up haughtily far over the top, and the wolves seeing this terrible ally of Man revelling there in his strength, and knowing nothing of his frequent treachery to his masters, went slowly away as though they had other purposes. And for the rest of that night the dogs of the encampment cried out to them and besought them to come back. But the tribe lay down all round the fire under thick furs and slept. And a great wind arose and blew into the roaring heart of the fire till it was red no longer, but all pallid with heat. With the dawn the tribe awoke.

Loz might have known that after such a mighty conflagration nothing could remain of his small furry beast, but there was hunger in him and little reason as he searched among the ashes. What he found there amazed him beyond measure ; there was no meat, there was not even his row of reddish brown stones, but something longer than a man's leg and narrower than his hand was lying there like a great flattened snake. When Loz looked at its thin edges and saw that it ran to a point, he picked up stones to chip it and make it sharp. It was the instinct of Loz to sharpen things. When he found that it could not be chipped his wonderment increased. It was many hours before he discovered that he could sharpen the edges by rubbing them with a stone ; but at last the point was sharp, and all one side of it except near the end, where Loz held it in his hand. And Loz lifted it and brandished it, and the Stone Age was over. That afternoon in the little encampment, just as the tribe moved on, the Stone Age passed away, which, for perhaps thirty or forty thousand years, had slowly lifted Man from among the beasts and left him with his supremacy beyond all hope of reconquest.

It was not for many days that any other man tried to make for himself an iron sword by cooking the same kind of small furry beast that Loz had tried to cook. It was not for many years that any thought to lay the meat along stones as Loz had done ; and when they did, being no longer on the plains of Thold, they used flints or chalk. It was not for many generations that another piece of iron ore was melted and the secret slowly guessed. Nevertheless one of Earth's many veils was torn aside by Loz to give us ultimately the steel sword and the plough, machinery and factories ; let us not blame Loz if we think that he did wrong, for he did all in ignorance. The tribe moved on

until it came to water, and there it settled down under a hill, and they built their huts there. Very soon they had to fight with another tribe, a tribe that was stronger than them ; but the sword of Loz was terrible and his tribe slew their foes. You might make one blow at Loz, but then would come one thrust from that iron sword, and there was no way of surviving it. No one could fight with Loz. And he became the ruler of the tribe in the place of Iz, who hitherto had ruled it with his sharp axe, as his father had before him.

Now Loz begat Lo, and in his old age gave his sword to him, and Lo ruled the tribe with it. And Lo called the name of the sword Death, because it was so swift and terrible.

And Iz begat Ird, who was of no account. And Ird hated Lo because he was of no account by reason of the iron sword of Lo.

One night Ird stole down to the hut of Lo, carrying his sharp axe, and he went very softly, but Lo's dog, Warner, heard him coming, and he growled softly by his master's door. When Ird came to the hut he heard Lo talking gently to his sword. And Lo was saying, " Lie still, Death. Rest, rest, old sword," and then, " What, again, Death ? Be still. Be still."

And then again : " What, art thou hungry, Death ? Or thirsty, poor old sword ? Soon, Death, soon. Be still only a little."

But Ird fled, for he did not like the gentle tone of Lo as he spoke to his sword.

And Lo begat Lod. And when Lo died, Lod took the iron sword and ruled the tribe.

And Ird begat Ith, who was of no account, like his father.

Now when Lod had smitten a man or killed a terrible beast, Ith would go away for a while into the forest rather than hear the praises that would be given to Lod.

And once, as Ith sat in the forest waiting for the day to pass, he suddenly thought he saw a tree trunk looking at him as with a face. And Ith was afraid, for trees should not look at men. But soon Ith saw that it was only a tree and not a man, though it was like a man. Ith used to speak to this tree, and tell it about Lod, for he dared not speak to any one else about him. And Ith found comfort in talking about Lod.

One day Ith went with his stone axe into the forest, and stayed there many days.

He came back by night, and the next morning when the tribe

awoke they saw something that was like a man and yet was not a man. And it sat on the hill with its elbows pointing outwards and was quite still. And Ith was crouching before it, and hurriedly placing before it fruits and flesh, and then leaping away from it and looking frightened. Presently all the tribe came out to see, but dared not come quite close because of the fear that they saw on the face of Ith. And Ith went to his hut, and came back again with a hunting spear-head and valuable small stone knives, and reached out and laid them before the thing that was like a man, and then sprang away from it.

And some of the tribe questioned Ith about the still thing that was like a man, and Ith said, "This is Ged." Then they asked, "Who is Ged?" and Ith said, "Ged sends the crops and the rain; and the sun and the moon are Ged's."

Then the tribe went back to their huts, but later in the day some came again, and they said to Ith, "Ged is only as we are, having hands and feet." And Ith pointed to the right hand of Ged, which was not as his left, but was shaped like the paw of a beast, and Ith said, "By this ye may know that he is not as any man."

Then they said, "He is indeed Ged." But Lod said, "He speaketh not, nor doth he eat," and Ith answered, "The thunder is his voice and the famine is his eating."

After this the tribe copied Ith, and brought little gifts of meat to Ged; and Ith cooked them before him that Ged might smell the cooking.

One day a great thunderstorm came trampling up from the distance and raged among the hills, and the tribe all hid away from it in their huts. And Ith appeared among the huts looking unafraid. And Ith said little, but the tribe thought that he had expected the terrible storm because the meat that they had laid before Ged had been tough meat, and not the best parts of the beasts they slew.

And Ged grew to have more honour among the tribe than Lod. And Lod was vexed.

One night Lod arose when all were asleep, and quieted his dog, and took his iron sword and went away to the hill. And he came on Ged in the starlight, sitting still, with his elbows pointing outwards, and his beast's paw, and the mark of the fire on the ground where his food had been cooked.

And Lod stood there for a while in great fear, trying to keep to his purpose. Suddenly he stepped up close to Ged and lifted his iron

sword, and Ged neither hit nor shrank. Then the thought came into Lod's mind, "Ged does not hit. What will Ged do instead?"

And Lod lowered his sword and struck not, and his imagination began to work on that, "What will Ged do instead?"

And the more Lod thought, the worse was his fear of Ged.

And Lod ran away and left him.

Lod still ruled the tribe in battle or in the hunt, but the chiefest spoils of battle were given to Ged, and the beasts that they slew were Ged's; and all questions that concerned war or peace, and questions of law and disputes, were always brought to him, and Ith gave the answers after speaking to Ged by night.

At last Ith said, the day after an eclipse, that the gifts which they brought to Ged were not enough, that some far greater sacrifice was needed, that Ged was very angry even now, and not to be appeased by any ordinary sacrifice.

And Ith said that to save the tribe from the anger of Ged he would speak to Ged that night, and ask him what new sacrifice he needed.

Deep in his heart Lod shuddered, for his instinct told him that Ged wanted Lod's only son, who should hold the iron sword when Lod was gone.

No one would dare touch Lod because of the iron sword, but his instinct said in his slow mind again and again, "Ged loves Ith. Ith has said so. Ith hates the sword-holders."

"Ith hates the sword-holders. Ged loves Ith."

Evening fell and the night came when Ith should speak with Ged, and Lod became ever surer of the doom of his race.

He lay down but could not sleep.

Midnight had barely come when Lod arose and went with his iron sword again to the hill.

And there sat Ged. Had Ith been to him yet? Ith whom Ged loved, who hated the sword-holders.

And Lod looked long at the old sword of iron that had come to his grandfather on the plains of Thold.

Good-bye, old sword! And Lod laid it on the knees of Ged, then went away.

And when Ith came, a little before dawn, the sacrifice was found acceptable unto Ged.

THE HEN

LORD DUNSANY

ALL along the farmyard gables the swallows sat a-row, twittering uneasily to one another, telling of many things, but thinking only of Summer and the South, for Autumn was afoot and the North wind waiting.

And suddenly one day they were all quite gone. And every one spoke of the swallows and the South.

"I think I shall go South myself next year," said a hen.

And the year wore on and the swallows came again, and the year wore on and they sat again in the gables, and all the poultry discussed the departure of the hen.

And very early one morning, the wind being from the North, the swallows all soared suddenly and felt the wind on their wings; and a strength came upon them and a strange old knowledge and a more than human faith, and flying high they left the smoke of our cities and small remembered eaves, and saw at last the huge and homeless sea, and steering by grey sea-currents went southward with the wind. And going South they went by glittering fog-banks and saw old islands lifting their heads above them; they saw the slow quests of the wandering ships, and divers seeking pearls, and lands at war, till there came in view the mountains that they sought and the sight of the peaks they knew; and they descended into an austral valley, and saw Summer sometimes sleeping and sometimes singing song.

"I think the wind is about right," said the hen; and she spread her wings and ran out of the poultry-yard. And she ran fluttering out on to the road and some way down it until she came to a garden.

At evening she came back panting.

And in the poultry-yard she told the poultry how she had gone South as far as the high road, and saw the great world's traffic going by, and came to lands where the potato grew, and saw the stubble upon which men live, and at the end of the road had found a garden, and there were roses in it—beautiful roses!—and the gardener himself was there with his braces on.

"How extremely interesting," the poultry said, "and what a really beautiful description!"

And the Winter wore away, and the bitter months went by, and the Spring of the year appeared, and the swallows came again.

"We have been to the South," they said, "and the valleys beyond the sea."

But the poultry would not agree that there was a sea in the South :
"You should hear our hen," they said.

THE ASSIGNATION

LORD DUNSANY

FAME singing in the highways, and trifling as she sang, with sordid adventurers, passed the poet by.

And still the poet made for her little chaplets of song to deck her forehead in the courts of Time ; and still she wore instead the worthless garlands, that boisterous citizens flung to her in the ways, made out of perishable things.

And after a while whenever these garlands died the poet came to her with his chaplets of song ; and still she laughed at him and wore the worthless wreaths, though they always died at evening.

And one day in his bitterness the poet rebuked her, and said to her : "Lovely Fame, even in the highways and the byways you have not forborne to laugh and shout and jest with worthless men, and I have toiled for you and dreamed of you and you mock me and pass me by."

And Fame turned her back on him and walked away, but in departing she looked over her shoulder and smiled at him as she had not smiled before, and, almost speaking in a whisper, said :

"I will meet you in the graveyard at the back of the Workhouse in a hundred years."



Story-Tellers of the Overseas

Canada—South Africa—Australia

IN these stories by Britons of the overseas the humour of the earlier writers, with its own simplicity and directness, makes less appeal in our day than the finer note struck by the later. Courageous daring, tender pity, the tragedy and pathos in the high romance of human life are conspicuous to the observer in the far-off places of the earth and so figure largely in his stories. Judge Haliburton, Nova Scotian lawyer (and in after years an English M.P.), with a fund of rollicking good spirits and shrewd common-sense, was endeared to a past generation as "Sam Slick." Little more than a practical joke is the point of "Sister Sall's Courtship," yet it is thoroughly characteristic of the author's style and humour.

Australia of the bushranging period is the scene of William S. Walker's "Midnight," and the element of comedy plays round the yarn of the police-inspector until the crack of pistol brings death to end the tale. With "Rodman the Boatsteerer" we have the best of all the short stories of the southern seas, written by Louis Becke, the Australian. The motive is fraternal love, and though for Rodman no happiness is born of the care lavished on the younger brother and sister, strength and steadiness remain, and sympathy and understanding. Clara Morris, the Canadian, once a famous actress in America, has a very different tale to tell. "The Wild Horse of Tartary" is just a reminiscence of circus life set down in admirable form. The fun of the amiable old horse turned on at a moment's notice to play the fiery untamed steed is irresistible, and the quick change from grave to gay makes the mirth more brilliant. "George Egerton," Australian born, widely travelled and an artist, belongs rather to England and the London of the 'nineties, when the vogue was to end an episode on a note of interrogation. So does "A Little Grey Glove" end. The delicate touch, the atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty, the mingling of hope and sorrow, the introspection revealing the heart of youth, all these are characteristic of their time. The treatment rather than

Louis
Becke

380 STORY-TELLERS OF THE OVERSEAS

the subject treated is the thing to be noted in the work of "George Egerton." C. G. D. Roberts, the New Brunswick professor, is more

than a writer of novels. He is a poet and a naturalist.

Charles G. D. Roberts And both the poet and naturalist are manifest in the story of "The Freedom of the Black-Faced Ram." It is

a finely-wrought study in animal life, it is a poem, and it is in its way a parable. Withal there is a story in it, a story that the reader must needs follow in expectation of the end. Ralph Connor is well known for his tales of the vast wild regions of the north-west of Canada, and his "Pilot at Swan Creek" displays completely in a small compass those redeeming qualities of pity and courage that

turn a preacher into a saint. Sir Gilbert Parker, one of the foremost of British novelists, is Canadian by origin, hence his appearance in this group with three brilliant illustrations of his art. "The Crimson Flag" is a masterpiece of passionate tragedy, showing the doom that comes swiftly and unexpectedly when life is mishandled. "The Absurd Romance of P'tite Louison" contains no absurdity, but its pathos has a singular charm. Pathos is the note, too, of "The Singing of the Bees"—a fragment of life beautiful in its simplicity. Olive Schreiner on the South African veld set down her dreams. But her allegories, product of high imaginative powers, are not directly concerned with South Africa, and these two short studies, allegories both, "In a Far-Off World" and "The Artist's Secret," belong to the universal order, and tell faithfully of the meaning of certain human experiences.

It is long since Marriott Watson left the Australia of his birth and the New Zealand of his boyhood and settled in England. His

work is not coloured by the atmosphere of new conditions and civilization in the making. Yet a man must have travelled far overseas for the perfect tone of "Quarantine."

H. B. Marriott Watson It is a great story, a model of the short story, related with no waste of words and without a word misplaced. Admirable in its characterization it presents a problem of conduct and leaves the answer to the reader. Henry Lawson is the real Australian. "When the Sun Went Down" and "That There Dog o' Mine" are incidents described with a simple directness that makes them vital. Their sentiment touches the heroic and demands our sympathy—the miner dying for his brother at the pit, and the disreputable old shearer who won't be operated on at the hospital unless his dog is tended as well.

Mary Gaunt is also from Australia, but she has explored the remoteness of West Africa, and the mysteries of the unknown, and has lived long in London. "The Doctor's Drive" is not a story of man's dealing with man, but of man threatened by nature and well-nigh overcome. Yet by sheer force of will in man and beast nature is beaten, for "the mails have got to go through," and the doctor on duty was no less bound to get through: a fine finish to these tales of the overseas where man is up against pitiless nature all the time and must prevail or perish.

J. C.

THOMAS CHANDLER HALIBURTON

1796-1865

SISTER SALL'S COURTSHIP

“**T**HERE goes one of them everlastin rottin poles in that bridge; they are no better than a trap for a critter’s legs,” said the Clockmaker. “They remind me of a trap Jim Munroe put his foot in one night, that near about made one leg half a yard longer than t’other. I believe I told you of him, what a desperate idle feller he was—he came from Onion County in Connecticut. Well, he was courtin Sister Sall—she was a rael handsum-looking gall; you scarce ever seed a more out and out complete critter than she was—a fine figur-head, and a beautiful model of a craft as any in the state; a real clipper, and as full of fun and frolic as a kitten. Well, he fairly turned Sall’s head; the more we wanted her to give him up, the more she wouldn’t, and we got plaguy oneasy about it, for his character was none of the best. He was a universal favourite with the galls, and tho’ he didn’t behave very pretty neither, forgetting to marry where he promised, and where he hadn’t ought to have forgot too; yet so it was, he had such an uncommon winnin way with him, he could talk them over in no time—Sall was fairly bewitched.

“At last, father said to him one evenin when he came a courtin, ‘Jim,’ says he, ‘you’ll never come to no good, if you act like old Scratch as you do; you aint fit to come into no decent man’s house, at all, and your absence would be ten times more agreeable than your company, I tell you. I won’t consent to Sall’s goin to them are huskin parties and quiltin frolics along with you no more, on no account, for you know how Polly Brown and Nancy White——’

“‘Now don’t,’ says he, ‘now don’t, Uncle Sam; say no more about that; if you know’d all, you wouldn’t say it was my fault; and, besides, I have turned right about, I am on t’other tack now, and the long leg, too; I am as steady as a pump bolt, now. I intend to settle myself and take a farm.’

“‘Yes, yes, and you could stock it too by all accounts, pretty well, unless you are much misreported,’ says father, ‘but it won’t do. I knowd your father, he was our sargeant, a proper clever and brave

man he was, too ; he was one of the heroes of our glorious revolution. I had a great respect for him, and I am sorry, for his sake, you will act as you do ; but I tell you once for all, you must give up all thoughts of Sall, now and for everlastin.'

" When Sall heerd this, she began to nit away like mad in a desperate hurry—she looked foolish enough, that's a fact. First she tried to bite in her breath, and look if there was nothin partikilar in the wind, then she blushed all over like scarlet fever, but she recovered that pretty soon, and then her colour went and came, and came and went, till at last she grew as white as chalk, and down she fell slap off her seat on the floor, in a faintin fit.

" ' I see,' says father, ' I see it now, you eternal villain,' and he made a pull at the old-fashioned sword, that always hung over the fireplace (we used to call it old Bunker, for his stories always begun, ' When I was at Bunker's Hill,') and drawin it out he made a clip at him as wicked as if he was stabbin a rat with a hay-fork ; but, Jim, he outs of the door like a shot, and draws it to arter him, and father sends old Bunker right through the panel.

" ' I'll chop you up as fine as mince-meat, you villain,' said he, ' if ever I catch you inside my door again ; mind what I tell you, *you'll swing for it yet.*'

" Well, he made himself considerable scarce arter that, he never sot foot inside the door agin, and I thought he had ginn up all hopes of Sall, and she of him ; when one night, a most particular uncommon dark night, as I was a comin home from neighbour Dearborne's, I heerd some one a talkin under Sall's window. Well, I stops and listens, and who should be near the ash saplin, but Jim Munroe, a tryin to persuade Sall to run off with him to Rhode Island to be married. It was all settled, he should come with a horse and shay to the gate, and then help her out of the window, jist at nine o'clock, about the time she commonly went to bed. Then he axes her to reach down her hand for him to kiss (for he was proper clever at soft sawder), and she stretches it down and he kisses it ; and says he, ' I believe I must have the whole of you arter all,' and gives her a jirk that kinder startled her ; it came so sudden like, it made her scream ; so off he sot hot-foot, and over the gate in no time.

" Well, I cyphered over this all night, a calculatin how I should reciprocate that trick with him, and at last I hit on a scheme. I recollected father's words at partin, ' *mind what I tell you, you'll swing*

for it yet, and thinks I, Friend Jim, I'll make the prophecy come true yet, I guess. So the next night, jist at dark, I gives January Snow, the old nigger, a nidge woth my elbow, and as soon as he looks up, I winks and walks out and he arter me—says I, 'January, can you keep your tongue within your teeth, you old nigger you?'

" 'Why, massa, why you ax that are question? my Gor Ormity, you tink old Snow he don't know that are yet; my tongue he got plenty room now, debil a tooth left, he can stretch out ever so far, like a little leg in a big bed, he lay quiet enough, massa, neber fear.'

" 'Well, then,' says I, 'bend down that are ash saplin softly, you old Snowball, and make no noise.'

"The saplin was no sooner bent than secured to the ground by a notched peg and a noose, and a slip knot was suspended from the tree, jist over the track that led from the pathway to the house.

" 'Why, my Gor, massa, that's a——'

" 'Hold your mug, you old nigger,' says I, 'or I'll send your tongue a sarchin arter your teeth; keep quiet, and follow me in presently.'

"Well, jist as it struck nine o'clock, says I, 'Sally, hold this here hank of twine for a minute, till I wind a trifle on it off; that's a dear critter.'

"She sot down her candle, and I put the twine on her hands, and then I begins to wind and wind away ever so slow, and drops the ball every now and then, so as to keep her down-stairs.

" 'Sam,' says she, 'I do believe you won't wind that are twine off all night, do give it to January, I won't stay no longer, I'm een amost dead asleep.'

" 'The old feller's arm is so plaguy onsteady,' says I, 'it won't do; but hark, what's that? I'm sure I heerd something in the ash saplin, didn't you, Sall?'

" 'I heerd the geese there, that's all,' says she; 'they always come onder the windows at night'; but she looked scared enough, and says she, 'I vow I'm tired a holdin out of arms this way, and I won't do it no longer': and down she throw'd the hank on the floor.

" 'Well,' says I, 'stop one minit, dear, till I send old January out to see if anybody is there; perhaps some o' neighbour Dearborne's cattle have broke into the scarce garden.'

"January went out, tho' Sall say'd it was no use, for she knew the noise of the geese, they always kept close to the house at night, for fear

of the varmin. Presently in runs old Snow, with his hair standin up an eend, and the whites of his eyes lookin as big as the rims of a soup plate ; ' Oh ! Gor Ormity,' said he, ' oh massa, oh Miss Sally, oh ! ! '

" ' What on airth is the matter with you ? ' said Sally, ' how you do frighten me, I vow I believe you're mad.'

" ' Oh, my Gor,' said he, ' oh ! massa, Jim Munroe he hang himself, on the ash saplin under Miss Sally's window—oh my Gor ! ! ! '

" That shot was a settler, it struck poor Sall right atwixt wind and water : she gave a lurch ahead, then heeled over and sunk right down in another faintin fit ; and Juno, old Snow's wife, carried her off and laid down on the bed—poor thing, she felt ugly enough, I do suppose.

" Well, father, I thought he'd a fainted too, he was so struck up all of a heap, he was completely bung fungered.

" ' Dear, dear,' said he, ' I didn't think it would come to pass so soon, but I knew it would come ; I foretold it ; says I, the last time I seed him, Jim, says I, mind what you say, *you'll swing for it yet*. Give me the sword I wore when I was at Bunker's Hill, may be there is life yet, I'll cut him down.'

" The lantern was soon made ready, and out we went to the ash saplin.

" ' Cut me down, Sam, that's a good feller,' said Jim, ' all the blood in my body was swashed into my head, and's a runnin out o' my nose, I'm een amost smothered—be quick, for heaven's sake.'

" ' The Lord be praised,' said father, ' the poor sinner is not quite dead yet. Why, as I'm alive—well if that don't beat all natur, why he has hanged himself by one leg, and's a swingin like a rabbit upside down, that's a fact. Why, if he aint snared, Sam, he is properly wired I declare—I vow this is some of your doings, Sam—well, it was a clever scheme, too, but a little grain too dangerous, I guess.'

" ' Don't stand starin and jawin there all night,' said Jim, ' cut me down, I tell you—or cut my throat and be damned to you, for I am choaking with blood.'

" ' Roll over that are hogshead, old Snow,' said I, ' till I get a top on it and cut him down ' ; so I soon released him, but he couldn't walk a bit. His ankle was swelled and sprained like vengeance, and he swore one leg was near about six inches longer than t'other.

" ' Jim Munroe,' says father, ' little did I think I should ever see you inside my door agin, but I bid vou enter now, we owe you that kindness anyhow.'

" Well, to make a long story short, Jim was so chapfallen, and so down in the mouth, he begged for heaven's sake it might be kept a secret ; he said he would *run* the state, if ever it got wind, he was sure he couldn't *stand it*.

" ' It will be one while, I guess,' said father, ' afore you are able to run or stand either; but if you will give me your hand, Jim, and promise to give over your evil ways, I will not only keep it a secret, but you shall be a welcome guest at old Sam Slick's once more, for the sake of your father—he was a brave man, one of the heroes of Bunker's Hill, he was our sergeant and——'

" ' He promises,' says I, ' father (for the old man had stuck his right foot out, the way he always stood when he told about the old war ; and as Jim couldn't stir a peg, it was a grand chance, and he was a goin to give him the whole revolution from General Gage up to Independence)—' he promises,' says I, ' father.'

" ' Well it was all settled, and things soon grew as calm as a pan of milk two days old ; and afore a year was over, Jim was as steady agoin a man as Minister Joshua Hopewell, and was married to our Sall. Nothin was ever said about the snare till arter the weddin. When the minister had finished axin a blessin, father goes up to Jim, and says he :

" ' Jim Munroe, my boy,' givin him a rousin slap on the shoulder that sot him a coughin for the matter of five minutes (for he was a mortal powerful man was father) ; ' Jim Munroe, my boy,' says he, ' you've got the snare round your neck I guess now, instead of your leg ; the saplin has been a father to you, may you be a father of many saplins.'

WILLIAM S. WALKER

"COO-EE"

B. 1846

"MIDNIGHT"

"WHAT? Did you never hear the yarn about 'Midnight'?" queried the Inspector, as he drew his chair nearer to the fire. "Well, I'll tell you."

"Twenty years or more have gone by, and that's a lifetime for some of us, but about that time, Lord, it was pretty well all 'Midnight' and his doings.

"Ben Hall and *his* gang had been broken up. Some had been shot red-handed, and the others had paid the penalty of their crimes in various ways.

"There had been a cessation of 'sticking-up' mail-coaches, robbing banks, and scaring station owners and bank managers out of their wits; when, all of a sudden this desperado took up the running.

"You never could tell for certain where he would turn up—one day the mail-coach would be stuck up in New South Wales. At the end perhaps of a week, an equally audacious case would be reported from Queensland, and the telegraph wires would be cut.

"Anon, the Victorian papers would be teeming with sensational paragraphs. He was a proper cunning scoundrel, and nobody seemed to be able to swear to him. Sometimes he would be described as mounted, sometimes not. But he was generally described as a tall, dark man, some people said *black*, always completely masked, and well armed.

"At that time I was serving in the New South Wales mounted police. I was fond of active service, possessed a little influence at headquarters, and was always ready for a little more than mere duty, with a view to ultimate promotion.

"I was quartered at 'Morabinda,' a somewhat dreary little township on the border.

"The place was only kept alive by the traffic of wool-waggons and bullock drays to and from Collinsville and the neighbouring stations.

"Of course the shearers and station-hands at the latter used to

come in and knock down their cheques, but there wasn't much 'running-in' in those days, so they got 'boozed' as much as they liked. In fact, it was a point of honour with most of them to get as well 'boozed' as possible, and they did little damage except to themselves. Also there would be an outbreak of festivity during the local races, but nine days out of ten during the year were monotonous and dull.

"I had got my sergeant's stripes, and worked under orders from Inspector Lysaght at Collinsville, and our biggest town on that far-away border of New South Wales.

"The Queensland black troopers kept their inside district on the 'Warrigal' and 'Narrabine' clear from any trouble arising from the blacks, and occasionally arrested a white man for horse-stealing, or petty larceny, and Captain Garforth, the Inspector, was a great favourite with the squatters.

"Now, if 'Midnight' had an enemy, a relentless uncompromising enemy, Captain Garforth was the man.

"Morn, noon, and night had he sworn to take him, alive or dead, the more especially as 'Midnight' had outwitted him on two or three occasions, and the Captain was of opinion that these unsuccessful quests told seriously against him with the Queensland Government.

"Never was there a more painstaking man than he had proved himself to be, and never a greater victim to bad luck.

"He generally was quickly enough on the spot if one of 'Midnight's' depredations occurred in his district, but he had never as yet even managed to catch a sight of him.

"It was not long after his accession to the post of Sub-Inspector at the Browar Barracks that 'Midnight' commenced his little games, and the Inspector felt intensely annoyed at not being able to put a sudden stop to them. 'Midnight's' last exploit in Garforth's district had been the robbery of a public-house and store, in a little bit of a township on the Warrigal, and since then nothing had been heard of the vagabond. People began to say that he had cleared out with his ill-gotten gains.

"Now Captain Garforth was especially tender about the last escapade. He and his troopers had come best pace down the river, only missing him by a couple of hours, but though they levied taxes on all the squatters for fresh horses, and followed him right on to New South Wales, they lost all trace of him!

"It was rumoured too that it would be well-nigh impossible to

catch 'Midnight,' because he had so many friends. 'Sly-shanty' keepers, shepherds, 'old-hands'—even blacks, all seemed to act as 'bush-telegraphs' for him. Leastways once he had started, and the policemen after him, he didn't seem like a common bushranger. Some people said he was the devil. One thing struck me at the time as being rather curious. 'Midnight' never seemed to *steal* a horse, but was generally reported as being mounted on a very powerful coal-black animal. All three Governments, New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, now outlawed him, and set a price upon his head, and the sum total represented a prize worth winning.

"I had given a great deal of thought to the case. Many and many a night had it kept me from sleeping, and I was not the only anxious man in the force either.

"There were two things which no doubt added greatly to 'Midnight's' popularity with the rough bush element.

"He never robbed a poor man, and had never attempted to kill any one, but it was generally understood that it would be terribly dangerous to meddle with or provoke him. Those few who had been let off lightly, especially some who had actually been presented with money by the bushranger, poor swagmen, were never tired of saying that he was a very powerful, athletic man.

"I believe it was partly the knowledge of this which piqued Garforth so much, as he himself had the reputation of being the best shot, rider, and boxer in Queensland, and was also very powerful and muscular.

"One of 'Midnight's' idiosyncrasies, if remonstrated with or resisted in the slightest degree, was the tying of his victim to a tree, leaving him there to be found by the first passer-by. Well, eight months had passed in positive tranquillity, when, like a thunderbolt, came the news that the bank in Collinsville had been robbed after dark, the manager picked up senseless in the strong room, and about £8000 in notes and gold coin missing. The manager in this instance had been stunned by a heavy blow behind the ear, and on coming to his senses was completely ignorant as to how it was done or who did it.

"Of course gossip alleged that it must have been 'Midnight' again; none but he had either the talent or daring to accomplish such a deed.

"Fate seemed, indeed, to have dealt hardly with Captain Garforth. Not only did he happen to be in the town at that identical time, but

he had actually called at the Bank that very day and deposited a sum of fifty pounds with the manager, who was a personal friend of his.

"You would have thought the Captain was mad. 'I shall lose my commission through this,' said he.

" 'To think that out of the few times I come here, once or twice a year perhaps, that devil should have chosen one of them to rob the bank under my very nose. I believe he is the devil and no mortal man.'

"Well, it was boot and saddle for the police, white as well as black, you bet. Of course we were only too glad to get the valuable assistance and advice of Captain Garforth's famous 'tracker' and orderly 'Joe.'

"Beyond the town he at once picked the hoof-marks of a horse, sometimes on and sometimes off the road. We followed them twenty miles, and arrested a quiet-looking fellow who looked as if he couldn't say 'bo' to a goose, and who was riding a sorry-looking horse.

"There wasn't the smallest particle of evidence against him at the trial, and though we scoured the district far and near we did no good.

"Captain Garforth left for Queensland in a perfect fury, stating that he should send in his resignation.

"Luck was dead against him, and it was more than a fellow could stand.

"With all his 'swagger' he was downcast and sullen, and there was a restless fire in his eyes, which seemed to show that he had been aggravated beyond endurance.

"I was at Morabinda when Garforth returned, and he blustered greatly as to what he would do with 'Midnight' when he captured him. 'For,' said he, 'if they accept my resignation, I will hunt him down myself!'

"Well, I had been piecing my puzzle together bit by bit, week by week, month by month, and as Garforth, with all his advantages, did not seem to be able to act as thief-taker, or to solve the mystery, I made application to headquarters to be allowed to carry out a scheme of my own, and that was to put myself in such a position as to be 'stuck-up' by 'Midnight,' either venturing upon his seizure then, if I got a show, or to mark his face and figure for further identification; so that I might have something tangible to go upon, better than this fleeting, uncertain individuality which had hitherto so successfully evaded the clutches of the law.

" Garforth went over to the barracks, and it was some time before he came back.

" ' Midnight ' had ceased to give further trouble ; but a horse-stealing case at Fulliver's attracted the Captain's attention, and he was down on this new offender like lightning, bringing his prisoner into Morabinda, as it was proved he came from there. As luck would have it, I was away at the time on urgent business, but Captain Garforth and his faithful orderly ' Joe ' rode into the township, and having consigned the prisoner to the lock-up, went to the principal hotel, the ' Criterion. ' (I daresay you have noticed that the smaller the town the more imposing is the name of the principal hotel.)

" Well, they walked into the bar, the Captain treating the orderly and calling for something stiff himself.

" There was an old shepherd there from the ' back-blocks,' spending his cheque liberally, a grizzled old fellow, with that half-shrewd, half-childish look generally stamped upon those accustomed to solitude. The old man was pretty ' well on,' and said he :

" ' Captain Garforth, you're a good hand at keeping down the blacks and catching horse-thieves, but I can't see why " Midnight " should be too much for you. You're a big, strong man, as big as " Midnight " himself, they say.'

" ' Who says so ? ' asked the Captain.

" ' Well, nigh every one, I think,' said the old fellow, ' leastways, every one I've spoken to about it.'

" ' Confound you ! ' roared the Captain. ' You mind your own business, and let ' Midnight ' be. I've had enough of him. If I could only get at him, I'd stop this talk.'

" ' What would you do, Captain ? What would you do ? ' asked the shepherd pertinaciously.

" ' Do ? ' said the Captain, ' I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd strip him and tie him to a tree, single-handed, in the way he is said to treat those who resist him, leaving him to boast of his deeds to the next passer-by, but I'd take care to be handy, and when he was released it would but be to be tied and handcuffed alongside of my saddle on his way to gaol.'

" ' No ! would you though ? ' said the shepherd with a face as long as his arm.

" Then he asked the Captain to take drink with him, and the Captain knowing that nothing really offended an ' old-hand ' so much as a

refusal to a special invitation in this form, acquiesced, 'shouting' another for him afterwards.

"The old fellow was getting very well 'on' when who should come in but young Hammersley from 'Yunta,' a cattle-station near by, and nothing would do but that the Captain must come to tea with him.

" 'I will come later on,' said the Captain. 'Can't come just yet,' and soon after that young Hammersley jumped upon his horse and rode away.

"Captain Garforth talked to the landlord a bit, and then went up to the store. When he came back it was near sundown, so telling 'Joe' to 'saddle-up' he remarked that 'Joe' was to stay in the township that night to help to keep guard on the prisoner, 'but I shall take him ('Joe') as far as the crossing-place, as I have instructions to give him. I must return the first thing in the morning myself, as I have to give evidence.'

"Just after dark, 'Joe' came back saying that the Captain had gone on to Yunta, and that he had left him about two miles this side of the station.

"That night at about ten o'clock, as the down-river mailman got into the big timber near the crossing-place, his horse shied so suddenly as nearly to unseat him, and that was not easily done as a rule, for Jem Donnelly was a smart lad in the saddle.

"There was Captain Garforth tied up to a tree, and his horse hitched up to another a little farther on.

"He was pretty stiff when Jem helped him to mount.

"He had been 'stuck-up' and robbed by a tall man on a black horse; had tried to fight him, but found his pistol-holster empty; would have sworn it was there before he left the hotel.

"Well, when he got back to the township, 'Joe' and he left at once to get the 'tracks,' but here again fortune was against them.

"They got the tracks at the river where the tussle had been, for the road crossed it twice on the way to Yunta, but a downpour of rain occurred, which obliterated everything, especially on the hard ground near the river. Once clear of the road there was no sign.

"The prisoner was to be tried, and they could not accomplish impossibilities, so they returned after daylight.

"I had got back, and by a curious coincidence, Colonel Lysaght, and Sergeant Major Tuke, with two constables, had arrived in time

to take part in the proceedings. You should have seen poor old Magistrate Browning's face, when I walked across the Court just as Captain Garforth was going to question his prisoner, and laying my hand on his shoulder, said: 'Captain Garforth, alias "Midnight," I arrest you in the Queen's name for highway robbery generally, and assault and robbery at the bank in Collinsville in particular.'

"He fought like a wild cat.

"It was as much as four of us could do to hold him.

"But we got the bracelets on him, though I got that," said the Inspector, touching a deep scar of old standing under the right eye. "For some time, I believe, the bench and spectators thought we had gone mad, but Lysaght, Tuke, and I knew what we were about.

" 'Dick the Devil,' the man arrested for horse-stealing, was in our employ and had got arrested on purpose. He had been prowling about the barracks for some time before this, found that the Captain and Joe worked together, and gathered quite enough evidence to piece my puzzle together, though the two were very 'fly.'

"I had many proofs, quite unnecessary to go into now, but one of the best I had I consider I possessed when I personated the old 'back-block' shepherd 'on the spree.'

"When I launched that shaft about the Captain's strength and size being identical with that of 'Midnight's' he had turned deadly pale, but I played my part too well for him to suspect that I was in the secret.

"That ruse of getting 'Joe' to tie him up to a tree near the Yunta crossing-place was a clever move and his trump card to allay suspicion, but the finding of the revolver in the river, alleged to be stolen by 'Midnight,' was only dead weight against him.

"Well, he confessed.

"It was as Captain Garforth he had assaulted the manager and robbed the bank. It will be remembered that earlier in the day he paid a visit there to pay in a sum of money. Returning after office hours to take further stock of the premises, he came suddenly upon the manager locking the safe in the strong room, and the opportunity was too much for a man of his propensities. That was to have been the end of it all, and the robbery was to have been accomplished at night, under the personality of 'Midnight,' after he himself, as Captain Garforth, had left.

"He never divulged where the money was hidden, probably in

some remote corner, known only to him and ‘Joe.’ The latter vanished the instant he saw trouble brewing, taking his carbine, but leaving his horse and trappings.

“It was no use our trying to find an agile, bare-footed black fellow skilled in bush art then. Besides, our hands were completely filled with our prisoner, who was both game and desperate.

“A peculiar smile lit up his features when he heard that ‘Joe’ had eluded us.

“As we wound along the up-river track *en route* for the Queensland capital with our prisoner strongly guarded in our midst, on the evening of our third day’s journey from Morabinda, just where a beautiful pine ridge juts in on the river, I heard a sharp, ringing crack, saw Garforth fall lifeless from his saddle, and was conscious of seeing two of our men charge up the bank into the timber.

“There was another report. They found ‘Joe’ in that ridge, but Death had got hold of him as well as Garforth, and Law was out of it. That’s the story, gentlemen.”

LOUIS BECKE

1848-1918

RODMAN THE BOATSTEERER

I

WITH her white cotton canvas swelling gently out and then softly drooping flat against her cordage, the *Shawnee*, sperm whaler of New Bedford, with the dying breath of the south-east trade, was sailing lazily over a sea whose waters were as calm as those of a mountain lake. Twenty miles astern the lofty peaks of Tutuila, one of the islands of the Samoan group, stood out clearly in the dazzling sunshine, and, almost ahead, what at dawn had been the purple loom of Upolu was changing to a cloud-capped dome of vivid green as the ship closed with the land.

The *Shawnee* was "a five-boat ship," and, judging from the appearance of her decks, which were very clean, an unlucky one. She had been out for over a year, and three months had passed since the last fish had been killed. That was off the coast of Chile, and she was now cruising westward and northward towards the eastern coast of New Guinea, where Captain Harvey Lucy, the master, expected to make up for the persistent ill-luck that had attended him so far. Naturally a man of most violent and ungovernable temper, his behaviour to his men on the present voyage had led to disastrous consequences, and the crew, much as they admired their captain as one of the most skilful whalers who had ever trod a deck, were now worked up into a state of exasperation bordering on mutiny. Shortly before the Samoan Islands were sighted, the ship's cooper, a man who took the cue for his conduct to the hands from the example set by the captain, had had a fierce quarrel with a young boatsteerer, named Gerald Rodman, who, in a moment of passion, struck the cooper such a terrific blow that the man lay between life and death for some hours. An attempt to put Rodman in irons was fiercely resisted by a number of his shipmates, who were led by his younger brother. But the after-guard were too strong for the men, and after a savage conflict the two Rodmans and three other seamen were overpowered by Captain Lucy, his four mates

and the carpenter and stewards. As was common enough in those days on American whaleships, nearly all the officers were relatives or connections by marriage, and were always ready to stand by the captain; in this instance the cooper was a brother of the second mate. Six days had passed since this affair had occurred, and when Upolu was sighted the five men were still in irons and confined in the hot stifling atmosphere of the sail-locker, having been given only just enough food and water to keep body and soul together.

Four bells struck, and Captain Lucy made his appearance from below. The watch on deck, who had hitherto been talking among themselves as they went about their work, at once became silent, and muttered curses escaped from their lips as they eyed the tall figure of the captain standing at the break of the poop. For some minutes he apparently took no notice of any one about him; then he turned to the mate, who stood near him, and said:

"Have you had a look at those fellows this morning, Brant?"

"Yes," answered the officer. "They want to know if you're going to let them have a smoke."

A savage oath preceded Captain Lucy's reply:

"They can lie there till they die before any one of them shall put a pipe in his mouth."

"Just as you please, captain," said the mate, nonchalantly. "I guess you know best what you're doing. But there's going to be more trouble aboard this ship if you don't ease up a bit on those five men; and if I were you I wouldn't go too far. One of 'em—that youngest Rodman boy—can't stand much more of that sail locker in such weather as this. And I guess I don't want to go before a grand jury if he or any of 'em dies."

"I tell you, Brant, that rather than ease up on those fellows, I'd lose the ship. I'm going to keep them there till we strike another fish, and then I'll haze what life is left in them clean out of them."

Rough and harsh as he was with the crew of the *Shawnee*, Brant was no vindictive tyrant, and was about to again remonstrate with the savage Lucy, when, suddenly, the thrilling cry of "There she blows!" came from the look-out in the crow's nest; and in a few minutes the barque's decks were bustling with excitement. A small "pod" or school of sperm whales were in sight. Four boats were at once lowered and started in pursuit.

When first sighted from the ship the whales were not more than

two miles distant, and moving towards her. The mate's boat was first away, and in a very short time fastened to the leader of the "pod"—a huge bull over sixty feet in length. In less than five seconds after the keen-edged harpoon had plunged deep into his body, the mighty fish "sounded" (dived) at a terrific speed; the other whales at once disappeared and Brant's boat shot away from the other three. The remaining boats were those of the captain and the second and third mates. For some ten or fifteen minutes their crews lay upon their oars watching the swift progress of the mate's boat, and scanning the sea from every point around them, to discern where the vanished and unstricken whales would rise to breathe again. At last they saw the great bull, to which the mate's boat was fast, burst out upon the surface of the water, two miles away. For a minute the mighty creature lay exposed to view, beating the sea into a white seeth of foam as he struck the water tremendous blows with his tail, and sought to free himself from the cruel steel in his body. As he thrashed from side to side, two of his convoy rose suddenly near him as if in sympathy with their wounded leader. Then, in an instant, they all disappeared together, the stricken whale still dragging the mate's boat after him at an incredible speed.

Knowing that in all probability the two whales which had just appeared would accompany the great bull to the last—when he would receive the stroke of the death-dealing lance from Brant—the captain of the *Shawnee* at once started off in pursuit, accompanied by the second and third mates' boats. The crews bent to their tough ash oars with strength and determination. There was no need for the dreadful oaths and blasphemies with which Captain Lucy and his officers assailed their ears, or his threats of punishment should they fail to catch up the mate's boat and miss killing the two "loose" whales; the prospect of such a prize was all the incentive the seamen needed. With set teeth and panting bosoms they urged the boats along, and presently they were encouraged by a cry from the third mate, who called out to the captain and second mate that the wounded whale was slackening his speed, and Mr. Brant was "hauling up alongside to give him the lance." In another fifty strokes the captain and the two officers saw the great head of the creature that was dragging the mate's boat along again appear on the surface, and on each side were his devoted cetacean companions, who were almost of as monstrous a size as the bull himself.

With savage oaths the captain urged his crew to fresh exertions,

for just then he saw the mate go for'ard in his boat and plunge his keen lance of shining steel into his prize, then back his boat off as the agonised whale again sounded into the blue depths below, with his life-blood pouring from him in a bubbling stream.

II

On board the *Shawnee* the progress of the boats was watched amid the most intense excitement ; and even the imprisoned seamen, in their foul and horrible prison, stretched their wearied and manacled limbs and sought to learn by the sounds on deck whether any or all of the boats were " fast "—that is, had harpooned a whale. Broken-spirited and exhausted as they were by long days of cruel and undeserved punishment, they would have forgotten their miseries in an instant had the fourth mate ordered them on deck to lower his boat—the only one remaining on board—and join their shipmates in the other boats in the chase. But of this they knew there was little prospect, for this remaining boat had been seriously injured by a heavy sea, which had washed her inboard a few days before the fight between the officers and crew. Presently, however, they heard the hurried stamping of feet on deck, and then the voices of the fourth mate and cooper giving orders to take in sail.

" Jerry," said a young English lad named Wray, to the elder Rodman, " do you hear that ? One of the boats must have got ' fast ' and killed. We'll be out of this in another half-hour, cutting-in. The captain won't let us lie here when there is work to be done on deck ; he's too mean a Yankee to satisfy his revenge at the expense of his pocket."

But their pleasant belief that a whale had been killed, and that the ship was shortening sail while the carcass was being cut-in, was rudely disturbed a few minutes later, when the *Shawnee* took a sudden list over to port, and they were all pitched to the lee side of the sail locker in a heap. A squall had struck the barque.

Bruised and lacerated by the force with which they had been hurled together, the five prisoners sat up, and were soon enlightened as to the condition of affairs by the carpenter making his appearance, taking off their galling irons, and ordering them on deck.

The squall was a very heavy one, accompanied by savage gusts of stinging rain, and the old ship, with her canvas in great disorder, was

every now and then thrown almost on her beam ends with its fury. After considerable trouble the officers and crew succeeded in saving her canvas from being blown to ribbons, and got the barque snug again. A quarter of an hour later the squall began to lose its force, but the rain descended in torrents, and obscured the view of the now agitated ocean to such an extent that the look-outs from aloft could not discern its surface a cable length away. All those on board the barque felt intense anxiety as to whether the mate had succeeded in killing his whale before the squall burst upon him, for they knew that had he not done so he would have been compelled to cut the line and let his prize escape ; no boat could live in such a sea as had arisen when " fast " to a sperm whale which was travelling at such a speed, even though fatally wounded and weak from loss of blood.

An hour passed, and then, to the joy of all on board, the rain ceased, a faint air came from the westward and blew away the thick clouds of tropic mist which enveloped the ship. Ten miles distant the verdant hills and valleys of Upolu glistened in the sunshine, and then one of the look-outs hailed the deck :

" I can see a boat, Mr. Newman—it is Mr. Brant's. He has killed his whale, sir."

In an instant the fourth mate was running aloft, but before he had ascended to the fore-top the look-out cried :

" I can see the other three boats now, sir, and they are all ' fast,' too."

A cheer broke from the *Shawnee's* hands, and, disregarding for the time all discipline, they sprang aloft one after another to gaze upon the thrilling scene. Three miles away, and plainly discernible in the now clear atmosphere, was the mate's boat lying alongside the big bull, which had just been killed, and at about the same distance were the boats of the captain and second and third mates, all " fast " to whales, and racing swiftly to windward toward the horizon.

The fourth mate at once came down from aloft and held a hurried consultation with the cooper—an old and experienced whaler. It was evident to them that the three boats had only just succeeded in getting " fast," and that, as darkness was so near, the officers in them would have great difficulty in killing the whales to which they were " fast," as the sea was still very lumpy from the violence of the squall. None of the boats were provided with bomb-guns, the use of which would have killed the whales in a very short time ; and the wind having again

died away it was impossible for the ship to work up to them. Nothing, it was evident, could be done to assist the three boats, but it was decided to send the one remaining on board the barque to help the mate to tow his whale to the ship before the hordes of sharks, which would be attracted to the carcass by the smell of blood, began to devour it.

The carpenter was at once set to work to make her temporarily water-tight. By this time the sun had set, and only the position of the mate's boat was made known to the ship by a light displayed by Mr. Brant.

Standing on the port side of the poop, Martin Newman, the fourth mate, was gazing anxiously out into the darkness, hoping to see the other three boats show lights to denote that they had succeeded in killing their fish, and were waiting for a breeze to spring up to enable the barque to sail towards them. Although Newman was the youngest officer on board, he was an experienced one, and the fact that his boat had not been fit to lower with the other four had filled him with sullen rage ; for he was of an intensely jealous nature, and would rather have seen the boats return unsuccessful from the chase than that he alone should have missed his chance of killing a fish.

Presently the younger of the two Rodmans, who was his (Newman's) own boatsteerer, ventured, in the fulness of his anxiety for his shipmates, to step up to the officer and speak :

"Do you think, sir, that the captain and Mr. Ford and Mr. Manning have had to cut their lines ? "

The officer made no reply ; and could the young boatsteerer have seen the dark, forbidding scowl upon his face, he would never have addressed him at such an unpropitious moment. But imagining that his question had not been heard, the youth repeated it.

Newman turned, and seeing the lad standing in an attitude of expectancy, asked him in savage tones what he was doing there.

"Nothing, sir ; I only——"

"I'll teach you that a man doing nothing doesn't suit me when I'm in charge of the deck of this ship ! " and he struck the boatsteerer a terrific blow in the mouth, which knocked him off the poop on to the main deck.

When Ned Rodman came to, he found his head supported by his brother and young Wray, and the rest of the hands on deck standing around him in sympathetic silence. Newman was the most liked of

all the officers, and the lad whom he had struck down had been rather a favourite of his, principally, it was supposed, because the two Rodmans came from the same town as himself ; and when the disturbance had arisen with the cooper, and the two brothers had been put in irons, Newman had several times expressed his sorrow to them when he had visited them in their prison. His sudden outburst of violence to Ned Rodman was therefore a surprise to the men generally ; and several of them glanced threateningly at the figure of the fourth mate, who was now striding to and fro on the poop, occasionally hailing the look-outs in angry tones, and asking if any more boat-lights were visible.

Gerald Rodman, though no words escaped his lips as he wiped away the blood which welled from a terrible cut on his brother's temple, had in his eyes a red light of passion that boded ill for the fourth mate when the time came. He was five years older than his brother, and, although both were boatsteerers, and had made many cruises in the Pacific, this was the first time they had been shipmates. Unlike Ned, he was a man of passionate and revengeful nature, and the second mate, to whose boat he belonged, had warned the cooper of the *Shawnee* never to meet Gerald Rodman ashore alone.

" He is a man who will never forgive an injury, and I would not care to be in your shoes if he gets you by yourself one day."

And, as a matter of fact, Gerald Rodman had sworn to himself, when he lay in irons, in the sail-locker, to have his revenge upon both the cooper and Captain Lucy, should he ever meet either of them ashore at any of the islands the barque was likely to touch at during her cruise. He was a man of great physical strength, and, for his position, fairly well educated. Both his parents were dead, and he and his brother Ned, and a delicate sister of nineteen, were the sole survivors of a once numerous family. The care of this sister was the one motive that animated the elder brother in his adventurous career ; and while his reserved and morose nature seemed incapable of yielding to any tender sentiment or emotion, it yet concealed a wealth of the deepest affection for his weakly sister, of which the younger one had no conception. And yet, strangely enough, it was to Ned that Nellie Rodman was most attached ; it was to *his* return that she most looked forward, never knowing that it was Gerald's money alone that maintained the old family home in the quiet little New England village in which her simple life was spent. Little did she think that when money was sent to her by Gerald, saying it came " from Ned and myself," that Ned had never

had a dollar to send. For he was too careless and too fond of his own pleasure to ever think of sending her money. "Jerry," he thought, "was a mighty stingy fellow, and never spent a cent on himself—and could easily send Nell all she wanted." And yet Gerald Rodman, knowing his brother's weak and mercurial nature, and knowing that he took no care in the welfare of any living soul but himself, would have laid his life down for him, because happy, careless Ned had Nellie's eyes and Nellie's mouth, and in the tones of his voice he heard hers. So as he sat on the deck, with his brother's head upon his knees, he swore to "get even" with Martin Newman, as well as with Captain Lucy and cooper Burr, for as he watched the pale face of the lad it seemed to him to grow strangely like that of his far-off sister.

He had just completed sewing up the gaping wound in his brother's temple, when the cooper came up to the group :

"Here, lay along, you fellows ; the carpenter has finished Mr. Newman's boat, and some of you loafing 'soldiers' have to man her and help Mr. Brant to tow his whale alongside. Leave that man there, and look spry, or you'll feel mighty sorry."

III

As the cooper turned away the younger Rodman, assisted by his brother, staggered to his feet. The fall from the poop had, in addition to the cut in his temple, severely injured his right knee, and he begged his brother to let him lie down again.

"Yes, yes," whispered Gerald Rodman, hurriedly ; "lie down, Ned," and then the lad heard him speaking to Wray in eager, excited tones.

"I'm with you, Jerry," said the young Englishman, quickly, in answer to something that Rodman had said ; "where is he now ?"

"In the cabin, getting some Bourbon for Mr. Brant's boat. There is only the Dago steward with him, and if Porter and Tom Harrod will join us we shall manage the thing right enough."

"What is the matter, Jerry—what are you talking about ?" asked Ned from where he lay.

"Keep still, Ned, and ask us nothing just now ; there's a chance of our getting clear of this floating hell. I needn't ask you if you'll join us. Come on, Wray."

The fourth mate and the Portuguese steward were in the main

cabin filling some bottles from a large jar of Bourbon whisky. Their backs were turned to the door, and both were so intent upon their task that they neither heard nor saw the four figures steal softly upon them. Suddenly they were seized from behind by Wray and Gerald Rodman, and then quickly gagged by Harrod and Porter before either had time to utter a cry. In a few minutes the four men had armed themselves with cutlasses from the rack around the mizzen-mast, which came through the cabin at the for'ard end of the table, Rodman also taking the captain's and chief mate's loaded revolvers out of their berths.

The fourth mate and steward were then carried into the captain's cabin, and Gerald Rodman spoke :

"Newman," he said, "we are going to take charge of this ship for awhile. If you make an attempt to give an alarm you are a dead man. Wray, stand here and run them both through if they make the ghost of a sound."

Again entering the captain's cabin, he returned with two or three charts, a sextant and the ship's chronometer, which he placed on the table just as a heavy footfall sounded on the companion steps. It was the cooper.

"The boat is all ready, Newman," he said, as he entered the somewhat darkened cabin ; "who is going in her ? "

"We are," said Rodman, dealing him a blow with the butt of his pistol and felling him. "Leave him there, Wray—he'll give us no trouble. Now take every one of those rifles out of the rack and put them on the table. There's two kegs of powder and a bag of bullets in Mr. Brant's cabin—get those as well."

This was quickly done, and, calling to the others to follow him, Rodman sprang up the companion. No one but the man at the wheel was on the poop, and the leader of the mutineers, looking over the rail, saw that the boat was alongside with only one hand in her. Besides this man there were but eight other persons as well as the mutineers on the ship, including the fourth mate, cooper, steward, and carpenter.

Calling the carpenter to him, Rodman covered him with his pistol, and told him and the rest of the startled men to keep quiet or it would be worse for them.

"Two of you help my brother into the boat," he ordered. He was at once obeyed, and Ned Rodman was passed over the side into the hands of the man in the boat.

"Put out every light on deck and aloft," was his next command,

and this was done by the watch without delay ; for there was in Rodman's face such a look of savage determination that they dared not think of refusing. Then he ordered them into the sail-locker.

" Now, Mr. Waller," he said, addressing the carpenter, " we don't want to hurt you and these three men with you. But we are desperate, and bent on a desperate course. Still, if you don't want to get shot, do as I tell you. Get into that sail-locker and lie low. Mr. Newman and the cooper and the steward are already disposed of. And I'm going to put it out of the power of Captain ' Brute ' Lucy to get me and those with me into his hands again."

" You won't shut us up in the sail-locker and scuttle the ship and let us drown, will you ? " asked the carpenter.

" No ; I'm no murderer, unless you make me one. If there is any one I have a grudge against it is Mr. Newman and the cooper ; but I won't do more to the cooper than I have already done. Still I'm not going to leave the ship in your hands until I have messed her up a bit. So away with you into the locker, and let us get to work."

Then, with the man from the boat, the carpenter and his companions were pushed into the sail-locker and the door securely fastened. Looking down from the skylight into the cabin Rodman saw that the cooper had not yet come to, and therefore no danger need be apprehended from him. Sending Wray below, the rifles, ammunition, and nautical instruments were passed up on deck and handed down into the boat. Then, leaving Porter on guard to watch the cooper, Rodman and the others went for'ard with a couple of axes and slashed away at the standing fore-rigging on both sides ; - they then cut half-way through the foremast, so that the slightest puff of wind, when it came, would send it over the side. Then, going for'ard, they cut through the head stays.

" That will do," said the boatsteerer, flinging down his axe ; and then walking to the waist he hailed the boat :

" Are you all right, Ned ? "

" Yes," answered the youth, " but hurry up, Jerry, I think a breeze is coming."

Running aft, the elder brother sprang up the poop ladder and looked down through the skylight into the cabin. " Cut Mr. Newman and the steward adrift," he said to Wray.

Wray disappeared into Captain Lucy's cabin, and at once liberated the two men, who followed him out into the main cabin.

"Martin Newman," said Rodman, bending down, "just a word with you. You, I thought, were a shade better than the rest of the bullying scoundrels who officer this ship. But now, I find, you are no better than Bully Lucy and the others. If I did justice to my brother, and *another person*, I would shoot you, like the cowardly dog you are. But stand up on that table—and I'll tell you why I don't."

The dark features of the fourth mate blanched to a deathly white, but not with fear. Standing upon the table he grasped the edge of the skylight, under the flap of which Gerald Rodman bent his head and whispered to him :

"Do you know why I don't want to hurt you, Martin Newman ? When I came home last year I found out my sister's love for you ; I found your letters to her, and saw her eating her heart out for you day by day, and waiting for your return. And because I know that she is a dying woman, and will die happy in the belief that you love her, I said nothing. What I have now done will prevent my ever seeing her again, though I would lay my life down for her. But listen to me. Ned will, must, return to her, and beware, if ever you accuse him of having taken a hand in this mutiny——"

The hands of the fourth mate gripped the skylight ledge convulsively, and his black eyes shone luridly with passion. Then his better nature asserted itself, and he spoke quietly :

"Jerry, I did not know it was Ned whom I struck to-night. I was not myself. . . . I never meant to harm *him*. And for Nell's sake, and yours and Ned's, give up this madness."

"Too late, too late, Newman. I would rather die to-night than spend another hour on board this ship. But at least, for Nell's sake, you and I must part in peace," and the mutineer held out his hand. It was grasped warmly, and then with a simple "goodbye" Rodman turned away, walked to the poop ladder and called out :

"Into the boat, men !"

Five minutes later they shoved off from the *Shawnee*, whose lofty spars and drooping canvas towered darkly up in the starless night. At the last moment Gerald Rodman had hoisted a light on the mizzen-rigging as a guide to the four absent boats. As the mutineers pulled quickly away its rays shone dimly over the barque's deserted decks.

When daylight came the *Shawnee* was still drifting about on a sea as smooth as glass, and the four boats reached her just before the dawn. The boat with the mutineers could not be discerned even from aloft,

and Captain Harvey Lucy, in a state of mind bordering on frenzy, looked first at his tottering foremast and then at the four whales which had been towed alongside, waiting to be cut-in. With the rising sun came another rain-squall, and the foremast went over the side, although Martin Newman with his men had done their best to save it. But Lucy, being a man of energy, soon rigged a jury-mast out of its wreck, and set to work to cut-in his whales. Three days later the *Shawnee* stood away for Apia Harbour in Samoa.

"Those fellows have gone to Apia," he said to mate Brant, "and I'll go there and get them if it takes me a month of Sundays."

But when the *Shawnee* dropped anchor in the reef-bound harbour, Captain Lucy found that he had come on a vain quest—the mutineers' boat had not been seen.

For seven years nothing was ever heard of the missing boat, till one day a tall, muscular-looking man, in the uniform of a sergeant of the New South Wales Artillery, came on board the American whaleship *Heloise*, as she lay in Sydney harbour, refitting. He asked for Captain Newman, and was shown into the cabin.

The captain of the *Heloise* was sitting at the cabin table reading a book, and rose to meet his visitor.

"What can I do for you, sir? Good God! is it you, Gerald Rodman!"

The soldier put out his hand. "Is my sister alive, Newman?"

"She died three years ago in my arms, hoping and praying to the last that she might see you and Ned before she died. And Ned?"

"Dead, Newman; he and Wray and Porter died of thirst. Harrod and I alone survived that awful voyage, and reached New Zealand at last. Was Nell buried with the old folks, Martin?"

"Yes," answered the captain of the *Heloise*, passing his hand quickly over his eyes, "it was her wish to lie with them. We had only been married two years."

The sergeant rose, and took Newman's hand in his, "Goodbye, Martin. Some day I may stand with you beside her grave."

And then, ere the captain of the whaleship could stay him, he went on deck, descended the gangway, and was rowed ashore to the glittering lights of the southern city.

CLARA MORRIS

B. 1849

THE WILD HORSE OF TARTARY

BUT there ! Just as I start to speak of my third season, I seem to look into a pair of big, mild eyes that say, " Can it be that you mean to pass *me* by ? Do you forget that 'twas I who turned the great sensation scene of a play into a side-splitting farce ? " —and I shake my head and answer truthfully, " I cannot forget. I shall never forget your work that night in Columbus, when you appeared as the ' fiery untamed steed ' (may Heaven forgive you !) in ' Mazeppa ' ! "

Mr. Robert E. J. Miles—or " All-the-Alphabet Miles," as he was frequently called—was starring at that time in the " horse " drama, doing such plays as " The Cataract of the Ganges," " Mazeppa," " Sixteen-String Jack," etc. " Mazeppa " was the favourite in Columbus, and both the star and the manager regretted that they had billed the other plays in advance, as there would have been more money in " Mazeppa " alone. Mr. Miles carried with him two horses ; one, for " The Wild Horse of Tartary," was an exquisitely formed, satin-coated creature, who looked wickedly at you from the corner of her blazing eye : who bared her teeth savagely, and struck out with her forefeet, as well as with her hind ones. When she came rearing, plunging, biting, snapping, whirling, and kicking her way on to the stage, the scarlet lining of her dilating nostrils and the foam flying from her mouth made our screams very natural ones, and the women in front used to huddle close together, or even cover their faces.

One creature only did this beautiful vixen love—R. E. J. Miles. She fawned upon him like a dog, and did tricks for him like a dog, but she was a terror to the rest of mankind. It was really a thrilling scene when Mazeppa was bound, his head tailward, his feet maneward, to the back of that maddened beast. She seemed to bite and tear at him, and when set free, she stood straight up for a dreadful moment, in which she really endangered his life ; then, with a wild neigh, she tore off up the " runs " as if fiends pursued her, with the man stretched

helplessly along her inky back. The curtain used to go up again and again, it was so very effective.

The other horse who travelled with Mr. Miles was an entirely different sort. He would have been described—according to the State where he happened to be—as a piebald, a skewbald, a pinto, or a calico horse. He was very large, mostly of a satiny white colour, with big absurdly-shaped markings of bright bay. He was one of that breed of horses which in livery stables are always known as “Doctor” or “Judge.” Benevolence beamed from his large, clear eyes, and he looked so mildly wise one half expected to see him put on spectacles. The boy at the stable said one day as he fed him, “I wouldn’t wonder if this ol’ parson of a hoss asked a blessin’ on them there oats—I wouldn’t!”

I don’t know whether Old Bob, as he was called, had any speed or not, but if he had it was useless to him; for alas! he was never allowed to reach the goal under any circumstances. He was always ridden by the villain, and therefore had to be overtaken. Besides that he generally had to carry double, as the desperado usually fled holding the tainting heroine before him, and though Old Bob successfully leaped chasms thus heavily handicapped—for truly he was a mighty jumper—nevertheless he was compelled to accept defeat. Mr. Miles always came rushing up to the rescue on the black horse, when Bob was very lucky, indeed, if he didn’t have to roll about and die; and he was a very impatient dead horse, often amusing the audience by lifting his head to see if the curtain was not down, and then dropping dead again, with a sigh the whole house could hear.

Anyway, being continually pushed back into second place, and compelled to listen to the unearned applause bestowed upon the beautiful black, Old Bob lost all ambition professionally, and he simply became a gourmet and a glutton. He lived to eat. A woman in his eyes was a sort of perambulating storehouse of cake, crackers, apples, sugar, etc.; only his love for children was disinterested. The moment he was loose he went off on a search for children, no matter whose so long as he found some; then down he would go on his knees, and wait to be pulled and patted. His habit of gathering very small people up by their back breadths, and carrying them a little way before dropping them, always filled the air with wild shrieks of laughter. In the theatre he walked sedately about before rehearsal began, and though we knew his attentions were entirely selfish, he was so urbane,

so complaisant in his manner of going through us, that we could not resist his advances, and each day and night we packed our pockets and our muffs with such provender as women seldom carry about in their clothes. All our gloves smelled as though we worked at a cider mill. While the play was going on, Old Bob spent a great part of his time standing on the first of the screened platforms connecting the runs, and as every one of us had to pass him on our way to dress, he demanded toll of all. Fruits, domestic or foreign, he received with gentle eagerness. Cake, crackers, and sugar—the velvety nose snuffed at them approvingly, and if a girl, believing herself late, tried to pass him swiftly by, his look of amazement was comical to behold, and in an instant his iron-shod foot was playing a veritable devil's tattoo on the resounding board platform. If that failed to win attention, following her with his eyes, he lifted up his voice in a full-chested "Neigh—hay—hay—*haay!*" that brought her back in a hurry with her toll of sugar. And that piebald hypocrite would scrunch it with such a piteously ravenous air that the girl quite forgot the satirical words her landlady had directed against her recently-acquired sweet tooth.

The dreadful night of disaster came late in the week. I don't recall the name of the play, but in that one piece the beautiful, high-spirited black mare had to carry double up the runs. John Carroll and Miss Lucy Cutler, were the riders. Mr. Carroll claimed that he could ride a little, and though he was afraid, he was ashamed to own it. Mr. Miles said in the morning: "Now if you are the least bit timid, Mr. Carroll, say so, and I will fasten the bridle reins to the saddle pommel, and Queen will carry you up of her own accord as true as a die and as safe as a rock; but if you are going to hold the bridle, for God's sake be careful! If it was Old Bob, you could saw him as much as you liked and he would pay no attention, but Queen, who has a tender mouth, is half-mad with excitement at night, and a very slight pressure on the wrong rein will mean a forty or fifty-foot fall for you all!" Miss Cutler expressed great fear, when Mr. Miles surprisedly said: "Why, you have ridden with me twice this week without a sign of fear?"

"Oh, yes," she answered, "but *you* know what you are doing—you are a horseman!"

It was an unfortunate speech, and in the face of it Mr. Carroll's vanity would not allow him to admit his anxiety. "He could ride well enough and he would handle the reins himself," he declared.

During the day his fears grew upon him. Foolishly and wickedly he resorted to spirits to try to build up some Dutch courage. Then when the scene came on, half-blind with fear and the liquor—which he was not used to—as he felt the fierce creature beneath him rushing furiously up the steep incline, a sort of madness came upon him. Without rhyme or reason he pulled desperately at the nigh rein, and in the same breath their three bodies were hurling downward like thunderbolts. It was an awful sight! I looked at them as they descended, and for the fraction of a second they seemed to be suspended in the air. They were all upside down. All, without turning or twisting, fell straight as plummets—the horse, the same as the man and woman, had its feet straight in the air. Ugh! the striking. Ugh! never mind details. The curtain was rushed down. Miss Cutler was picked up dazed, stunned, but without a mark. Mr. Carroll crept away unaided amid the confusion, the sorrow, and the tears, for splendid Queen was doomed. Though Mr. Miles had risked his own life in an awful leap to save her from falling through a trap, he could not save her life, and the almost human groan with which she dropped her lovely head upon her master's shoulders, and his streaming eyes as he tenderly wiped the blood from her velvety nostrils, made even the scene-shifters rub their eyes upon the backs of their hands. While Queen was half-carried to the fire-engine house next door (her stable was too far away), some one went before the curtain and assured the audience that the accident was very slight, and that the lady and gentleman would both appear presently. The audience applauded in a rather doubtful manner, for several ladies had fainted, and the carrying out of a helpless person in a place of amusement always has a depressing effect upon the lookers-on. Meantime Mr. Carroll was getting his wrist bandaged and a cut on his face patched up, while a basket of sawdust was hurriedly procured that certain cruel stains might be concealed. The orchestra played briskly, and the play went on. That's the one thing we can be sure of in this world—that the play will go on. Late that night, beautiful Queen died, with her head resting on her master's knee.

Now "Mazeppa" was billed for the next night, and there were many consultations held in the office and on the stage. "The Wild Horse of Tartary" was gone. It was impossible to find a new horse in one day. "Change the bill!" said Mr. Miles. "And have an empty house," answered Mr. Ellsler.

"But what can I do for a horse?" asked Mr. Miles.

"Use Old Bob," answered Mr. Ellsler.

"Good Lord!" groaned Bob's master. They argued long, but neither wanted to lose the good house, so the bill was allowed to stand and "Mazeppa" was performed with Old Bob as "The Wild Horse of Tartary." Think of it—that ingratiating Old Bob, that follower of women and playmate of children! Why, even the great bay blotches on his white old hide made one think of the circus, of paper hoops, and of *training*, rather than of wildness. With the hope of making him at least impatient and restless, he had been deprived of his supper, and the result was a settled gloom, an air of melancholy, that made Mr. Miles swear under his breath every time he looked at him.

The play moved along nicely, the house was large, and seemed pleased. Mazeppa fell into his enemy's hands, the sentence was pronounced, and the order followed, "Bring forth the fiery, untamed steed!" The women of the audience began to draw close to their escorts. Many of them remembered the biting, kicking entrance of the black, and were frightened beforehand. The orchestra responded with incidental, creepy music, but that was all. Over in the entrance, Old Bob, surrounded by the four men who were supposed to restrain him, stood quietly. But those who sat in the left box heard "get-ups!" and "go-ons!" and the cluckings of many tongues. The mighty Khan of Tartary (who could not see that entrance) thought he had not been heard, and he roared again, "Bring forth the fiery, untamed steed!" Another pause; the house tittered; then some one hit Old Bob a crack across the rump with a whip, at which he gave a switch of his tail, and gently ambled on to the stage. He stopped of his own accord at the centre, and, lowering his head, stretched out his neck and sniffed at the leader of the orchestra, precisely as a dog sniffs at a stranger. It was deliciously ridiculous. We girls were supposed to scream with fear of the "wild horse," and alas! we were only too obedient; crowding down at the right, clinging together in attitudes of extremest fright, we shrieked and screeched until Old Bob pricked up his ears, and looked so astonished at our conduct that the audience simply rocked back and forth with laughter. And all the time Mazeppa was saying things that did not seem at all like prayers. Finally he gave orders for the men to surround Bob, which they did, and then a sharp little spike was used—that was to make him dance about pretty lively. It pricked him on the shoulder, and the "wild horse" stood

and switched his tail. It pricked him again ; he switched his tail again. The men had by this time grown careless, and when the spike was finally used at his mane, he suddenly kicked one of them clear of the stage, and then resumed his unruffled calm. The public thought it was having fun all this time, but pretty soon it knew it. Nothing under heaven could disturb the gentle serenity of that doglike old horse. When Mazeppa was brought forward to be bound upon Old Bob's back, instead of pulling away, and rearing and fighting against the burden, his one and only quick movement was his violent effort to break away from his tormentors and welcome his master joyously.

" Oh ! " groaned Miles, " kill him, somebody, before he kills me ! "

While Mazeppa was being bound on the " wild horse's " back our instructions were to scream ; therefore we screamed as before, and, being on the verge of insanity, Miles lifted his head from the horse's back, and said, " Oh, shut up, do ! " The audience heard, and—well, it laughed some more, and then it discovered, when the men sprang away and left the horse free to dash madly up the mountain, that Mazeppa had kept one foot unbound to kick Old Bob with ; and truly it did seem that the audience was going into convulsions—such laughter, pierced every now and then by the shrill scream of hysterics. Old Bob ambled up the first run all right, but, alas ! for poor Mazeppa, as the " wild horse " reached the first platform, a woman passed on the way to her room, and hungry Bob instantly stopped to negotiate a loan in sugar. Oh, it was dreadful—the wait—and when finally he reappeared, trotting—yes, trotting up the next run—Mr. Miles's foot could be plainly seen kicking with the regularity of a piston-rod, while his remarks were—well, they were irregular in the extreme !

Of course the play was hopelessly ruined. The audience laughed at the slightest mention of the " wild horse," and when the shepherds found horse and man, lying at the foot of the mountain, worn out and exhausted, the building seemed to shake with the laughter.

When the play was over at last, Old Bob walked up to his master and mumbled his hand. Mr. Miles pushed him away with pretended anger, crying : " You infernal old idiot, I'd sell you for a three-cent stamp with gum on it ! "

Bob looked hard at him a moment ; then he calmly crossed behind him and mumbled his other hand, and Mr. Miles pulled his ears, and said that he, himself, was the idiot for expecting an untrained, unrehearsed horse to play such a part, and Old Bob agreeing with him perfectly, they were, as always, at peace with each other.

GEORGE EGERTON
(Mrs. GOLDING BRIGHT)
B. 1860

A LITTLE GREY GLOVE

*"The book of life begins with a man and woman in a garden and ends
—with Revelations."*—OSCAR WILDE.

YES, most fellows' book of life may be said to begin at the chapter where woman comes in ; mine did. She came in years ago, when I was a raw undergraduate. With the sober thought of retrospective analysis, I may say she was not all my fancy painted her ; indeed, now that I come to think of it there was no fancy about the vermeil of her cheeks, rather an artificial reality ; she had her bower in the bar of the Golden Boar, and I was madly in love with her, seriously intent on lawful wedlock. Luckily for me she threw me over for a neighbouring pork butcher, but at the time I took it hardly, and it made me sex-shy. I was a very poor man in those days. One feels one's grief more keenly then, one hasn't the wherewithal to buy distraction. Besides, ladies snubbed me rather, on the rare occasions I met them. Later I fell in for a legacy, the forerunner of several ; indeed, I may say I am beastly rich. My tastes are simple too, and I haven't any poor relations. I believe they are of great assistance in getting rid of superfluous capital—wish I had some ! It was after the legacy that women discovered my attractions. They found that there was something superb in my plainness (before, they said ugliness), something after the style of the late Victor Emanuel, something infinitely more striking than mere ordinary beauty. At least so Harding told me his sister said, and she had the reputation of being a clever girl. Being an only child, I never had the opportunity other fellows had of studying the undress side of women through familiar intercourse, say with sisters. Their most ordinary belongings were sacred to me. I had, I used to be told, ridiculous high-flown notions about them (by the way I modified those considerably on closer acquaintance). I ought to study them ; nothing like a woman for developing a fellow. So I laid in a stock of books in different languages,

mostly novels, in which women played title-roles, in order to get up some definite data before venturing amongst them. I can't say I derived much benefit from this course. There seemed to be as great a diversity of opinion about the female species as, let us say, about the salmonidae.

My friend Ponsonby Smith, who is one of the oldest fly-fishers in the three kingdoms, said to me once : " Take my word for it, there are only four true salmo ; the salar, the trutta, the fario, the ferox ; all the rest are just varieties, subgenuses of the above ; stick to that. Some writing fellow divided all the women into good-uns and bad-uns. But as a conscientious stickler for truth, I must say that both in trout as in women, I have found myself faced with most puzzling varieties, that were a tantalising blending of several qualities." I then resolved to study them on my own account. I pursued the Eternal Feminine in a spirit of purely scientific investigation. I knew you'd laugh sceptically at that, but it's a fact. I was impartial in my selection of subjects for observation—French, German, Spanish, as well as the home product. Nothing in petticoats escaped me. I devoted myself to the freshest *ingénue* as well as the experienced widow of three departed ; and I may as well confess that the more I saw of her, the less I understood her. But I think they understood me. They refused to take me *au sérieux*. When they weren't fleecing me, they were interested in the state of my soul (I preferred the former), but all humbugged me equally, so I gave them up. I took to rod and gun instead, *pro salute animae* ; it's decidedly safer. I have scoured every country in the globe ; indeed, I can say that I have shot and fished in woods and waters where no other white man, perhaps, ever dropped a beast or played a fish before. There is no life like the life of a free wanderer, and no lore like the lore one gleans in the great book of nature. But one must have freed one's spirit from the taint of the town before one can even read the alphabet of its mystic meaning.

What has this to do with the glove ? True, not much, and yet it has a connection—it accounts for me.

Well, for twelve years I have followed the impulses of the wandering spirit that dwells in me. I have seen the sun rise in Finland and gild the Devil's Knuckles as he sank behind the Drachensberg. I have caught the barba and the gamer yellow fish in the Vaal river, taken muskelunge and black-bass in Canada, thrown a fly over *guapote* and *cavallo* in Central American lakes, and choked the monster eels of the

Mauritius with a cunningly faked-up duckling. But I have been shy as a chub at the shadow of a woman.

Well, it happened last year I came back on business—another confounded legacy ; end of June too, just as I was off to Finland. But Messrs. Thimble and Rigg, the highly respectable firm who look after my affairs, represented that I owed it to others, whom I kept out of their share of the legacy, to stay near town till affairs were wound up. They told me, with a view to reconcile me perhaps, of a trout stream with a decent inn near it ; an unknown stream in Kent. It seems a junior member of the firm is an angler, at least he sometimes catches pike or perch in the Medway some way from the stream where the trout rise in audacious security from artificial lures. I stipulated for a clerk to come down with any papers to be signed, and started at once for Victoria. I decline to tell the name of my find, firstly because the trout are the gamest little fish that ever rose to fly and run to a good two pounds. Secondly I have paid for all the rooms in the inn for the next year, and I want it to myself. The glove is lying on the table next me as I write. If it isn't in my breast-pocket or under my pillow, it is in some place where I can see it. It has a delicate grey body (Suède, I think they call it) with a whipping of silver round the top, and a darker grey silk tag to fasten it. It is marked 5½ inside, and has a delicious scent about it, to keep off moths, I suppose ; naphthaline is better. It reminds me of a " silver-sedge " tied on a ten hook. I startled the good landlady of the little inn (there is no village fortunately) when I arrived with the only porter of the tiny station laden with traps. She hesitated about a private sitting-room, but eventually we compromised matters, as I was willing to share it with the other visitor. I got into knickerbockers at once, collared a boy to get me worms and minnow for the morrow, and as I felt too lazy to unpack tackle, just sat in the shiny arm-chair (made comfortable by the successive sitting of former occupants) at the open window and looked out. The river, not the trout stream, winds to the right, and the trees cast trembling shadows into its clear depths. The red tiles of a farm roof show between the beeches, and break the monotony of blue sky background. A dusty waggoner is slaking his thirst with a tankard of ale. I am conscious of the strange lonely feeling that a visit to England always gives me. Away in strange lands, even in solitary places, one doesn't feel it somehow. One is filled with the hunter's lust, bent on a " kill " ; but at home in the

quiet country, with the smoke curling up from some fireside, the mowers busy laying the hay in swaths, the children tumbling under the trees in the orchards, and a girl singing as she spreads the clothes on the sweetbrier hedge, amidst a scene quick with home sights and sounds, a strange lack creeps in and makes itself felt in a dull, aching way. Oddly enough, too, I had a sense of uneasiness, a "something going to happen." I had often experienced it when out alone in a great forest, or on an unknown lake, and it always meant "'ware danger" of some kind. But why should I feel it here? Yet I did, and I couldn't shake it off. I took to examining the room. It was a commonplace one of the usual type. But there was a work-basket on the table, a dainty thing, lined with blue satin. There was a bit of lace stretched over shiny blue linen, with the needle sticking in it; such fairy work, like cobwebs seen from below, spun from a branch against a background of sky. A gold thimble, too, with initials, not the landlady's, I know. What pretty things, too, in the basket! A scissors, a capital shape for fly-making; a little file and some floss silk and tinsel, the identical colour I want for a new fly I have in my head, one that will be a demon to kill. The northern devil I mean to call him. Some one looks in behind me, and a light step passes up-stairs. I drop the basket; I don't know why. There are some reviews near it. I take up one, and am soon buried in an article on Tasmanian fauna. It is strange, but whenever I do know anything about a subject, I always find these writing fellows either entirely ignorant or damned wrong.

After supper I took a stroll to see the river. It was a silver grey evening, with just the last lemon and pink streaks of the sunset staining the sky. There had been a shower, and somehow the smell of the dust after rain mingled with the mignonette in the garden brought back vanished scenes of small-boyhood, when I caught minnows in a bottle, and dreamt of a shilling rod as happiness unattainable. I turned aside from the road in accordance with directions, and walked towards the stream. Holloa! some one before me, what a bore! The angler is hidden by an elder-bush, but I can see the fly drop delicately, artistically on the water. Fishing up-stream, too! There is a bit of broken water there, and the midges dance in myriads; a silver gleam, and the line spins out, and the fly falls just in the right place. It is growing dusk, but the fellow is an adept at quick, fine casting—I wonder what fly he has on—why, he's going to try down-stream now! I hurry forward, and as I near him, I swerve to the left out of the way.

S-s-s-s ! a sudden sting in the lobe of my ear. Hey ! I cry as I find I am caught ; the tail fly is fast in it. A slight, grey-clad woman holding the rod lays it carefully down and comes towards me through the gathering dusk. My first impulse is to snap the gut and take to my heels, but I am held by something less tangible but far more powerful than the grip of the Limerick hook in my ear.

" I am very sorry ! " she says in a voice that matched the evening, it was so quiet and soft ; " but it was exceedingly stupid of you to come behind like that."

" I didn't think you threw such a long line ; I thought I was safe," I stammered.

" Hold this," she says, giving me a diminutive fly-book, out of which she has taken a scissors. I obey meekly. She snips the gut.

" Have you a sharp knife ? If I strip the hook you can push it through ; it is lucky it isn't in the cartilage."

I suppose I am an awful idiot, but I only handed her the knife, and she proceeded as calmly as if stripping a hook in a man's ear were an everyday occurrence. Her gown is of some soft grey stuff, and her grey leather belt is silver clasped. Her hands are soft and cool and steady, but there is a rarely disturbing thrill in their gentle touch. The thought flashed through my mind that I had just missed that, a woman's voluntary tender touch, not a paid caress, all my life.

" Now you can push it through yourself. I hope it won't hurt much." Taking the hook, I push it through, and a drop of blood follows it. " Oh ! " she cries, but I assure her it is nothing, and stick the hook surreptitiously in my coat sleeve. Then we both laugh, and I look at her for the first time. She has a very white forehead, with little tendrils of hair blowing round it under her grey cap, her eyes are grey. I didn't see that then, I only saw they were steady, smiling eyes that matched her mouth. Such a mouth, the most maddening mouth a man ever longed to kiss, above a too pointed chin, soft as a child's ; indeed, the whole face looks soft in the misty light.

" I am sorry I spoilt your sport ! " I say.

" Oh, that don't matter, it's time to stop. I got two brace, one a beauty."

She is winding in her line, and I look in her basket ; they *are* beauties, one two-pounder, the rest running from a half to a pound.

" What fly ? "

"Yellow dun took that one, but your assailant was a partridge spider."

I sling her basket over my shoulder ; she takes it as a matter of course, and we retrace our steps. I feel curiously happy as we walk towards the road ; there is a novel delight in her nearness ; the feel of woman works subtly and strangely in me ; the rustle of her skirt as it brushes the black-heads in the meadow-grass, and the delicate perfume, partly violets, partly herself, that comes to me with each of her movements is a rare pleasure. I am hardly surprised when she turns into the garden of the inn, I think I knew from the first that she would.

"Better bathe that ear of yours, and put a few drops of carbolic in the water." She takes the basket as she says it, and goes into the kitchen. I hurry over this and go into the little sitting-room. There is a tray with a glass of milk and some oaten cakes upon the table. I am too disturbed to sit down ; I stand at the window and watch the bats flitter in the gathering moonlight, and listen with quivering nerves for her step—perhaps she will send for the tray, and not come after all. What a fool I am to be disturbed by a grey-clad witch with a tantalising mouth ! That comes of loafing about doing nothing. I mentally darn the old fool who saved her money instead of spending it. Why the devil should I be bothered ? I don't want it anyhow. She comes in as I fume, and I forget everything at her entrance. I push the arm-chair towards the table, and she sinks quietly into it, pulling the tray nearer. She has a wedding ring on, but somehow it never strikes me to wonder if she is married or a widow or who she may be. I am content to watch her break her biscuits. She has the prettiest hands, and a trick of separating her last fingers when she takes hold of anything. They remind me of white orchids I saw somewhere. She led me to talk ; about Africa, I think. I liked to watch her eyes glow deeply in the shadow and then catch light as she bent forward to say something in her quick responsive way.

"Long ago when I was a girl," she said once.

"Long ago ? " I echo incredulously, "surely not ? "

"Ah, but yes, you haven't seen me in the daylight," with a soft little laugh. "Do you know what the gipsies say ? 'Never judge a woman or a ribbon by candle-light.' They might have said moonlight equally well."

She rises as she speaks, and I feel an overpowering wish to have

her put out her hand. But she does not, she only takes the work-basket and a book, and says good-night with an inclination of her little head.

I go over and stand next her chair ; I don't like to sit in it, but I like to put my hand where her head leant, and fancy, if she were there, how she would look up.

I woke next morning with a curious sense of pleasurable excitement. I whistled from very lightness of heart as I dressed. When I got down I found the landlady clearing away her breakfast things. I felt disappointed and resolved to be down earlier in future. I didn't feel inclined to try the minnow. I put them in a tub in the yard and tried to read and listen for her step. I dined alone. The day dragged terribly. I did not like to ask about her, I had a notion she might not like it. I spent the evening on the river. I might have filled a good basket, but I let the beggars rest. After all, I had caught fish enough to stock all the rivers in Great Britain. There are other things than trout in the world. I sit and smoke a pipe where she caught me last night. If I half close my eyes I can see hers, and her mouth in the smoke. That is one of the curious charms of baccy, it helps to reproduce brain pictures. After a bit I think "perhaps she has left." I get quite feverish at the thought and hasten back. I must ask. I look up at the window as I pass ; there is surely a gleam of white. I throw down my traps and hasten up. She is leaning with her arms on the window-ledge staring out into the gloom. I could swear I caught a suppressed sob as I entered. I cough, and she turns quickly and bows slightly. A bonnet and gloves and lace affair and a lot of papers are lying on the table. I am awfully afraid she is going. I say :

" Please don't let me drive you away, it is so early yet. I half expected to see you on the river."

" Nothing so pleasant ; I have been up in town (the tears have certainly got into her voice) all day ; it was so hot and dusty, I am tired out."

The little servant brings in the lamp and a tray with a bottle of lemonade.

" Mistress hasn't any lemons, 'm, will this do ? "

" Yes," she says wearily, she is shading her eyes with her hands ; " anything, I am fearfully thirsty."

" Let me concoct you a drink instead. I have lemons and ice and

things. My man sent me down supplies to-day ; I leave him in town. I am rather a dab at drinks ; learnt it from the Yankees ; about the only thing I did learn from them I care to remember. Susan ! " The little maid helps me to get the materials, and *she* watches me quietly. When I give it to her she takes it with a smile (she *has* been crying). That is an ample thank-you. She looks quite old. Something more than tiredness called up those lines in her face.

Well, ten days passed, sometimes we met at breakfast, sometimes at supper, sometimes we fished together or sat in the straggling orchard and talked ; she neither avoided me nor sought me. She is the most charming mixture of child and woman I ever met. She is a dual creature. Now I never met that in a man. When she is here without getting a letter in the morning or going to town, she seems like a girl. She runs about in her grey gown and little cap, and laughs and seems to throw off all thought like an irresponsible child. She is eager to fish, or pick gooseberries and eat them daintily, or sit under the trees and talk. But when she goes to town—I notice she always goes when she gets a lawyer's letter, there is no mistaking the envelope—she comes home tired and haggard-looking, an old woman of thirty-five. I wonder why. It takes her, even with her elasticity of temperament, nearly a day to get young again. I hate her to go to town ; it is extraordinary how I miss her ; I can't recall, when she is absent, her saying anything very wonderful, but she converses all the time. She has a gracious way of filling the place with herself, there is an entertaining quality in her very presence. We had one rainy afternoon ; she tied me some flies (I shan't use any of them) ; I watched the lights in her hair as she moved, it is quite golden in some places, and she has a tiny mole near her left ear and another on her left wrist. On the eleventh day she got a letter but she didn't go to town, she stayed up in her room all day ; twenty times I felt inclined to send her a line, but I had no excuse. I heard the landlady say as I passed the kitchen window : " Poor dear ! I'm sorry to lose her ! " Lose her ? I should think not. It has come to this with me that I don't care to face any future without her ; and yet I know nothing about her, not even if she is a free woman. I shall find that out the next time I see her. In the evening I catch a glimpse of her gown in the orchard and I follow her. We sit down near the river. Her left hand is lying gloveless next me in the grass.

"Do you think from what you have seen of me, that I would ask a question out of any mere impertinent curiosity?"

She starts—"No, I do not."

I take up her hand and touch the ring. "Tell me, does this bind you to any one?"

I am conscious of a buzzing in my ears and a dancing blurr of water and sky and trees as I wait (it seems to me an hour) for her reply. I felt the same sensation once before, when I got drawn into some rapids and had an awfully narrow shave, but of that another time.

The voice is shaking.

"I am not legally bound to any one, at least; but why do you ask?" She looks me square in the face as she speaks, with a touch of haughtiness I never saw in her before.

Perhaps the great relief I feel, the sense of joy at knowing she is free, speaks out of my face, for hers flushes and she drops her eyes, her lips tremble. I don't look at her again, but I can see her all the same. After a while she says:

"I half intended to tell you something about myself this evening, now I *must*. Let us go in. I shall come down to the sitting-room after your supper." She takes a long look at the river and the inn, as if fixing the place in her memory; it strikes me with a chill that there is a good-bye in her gaze. Her eyes rest on me a moment as they come back, there is a sad look in their grey clearness. She swings her little grey gloves in her hand as we walk back. I can hear her walking up and down overhead; how tired she will be, and how slowly the time goes. I am standing at one side of the window when she enters; she stands at the other, leaning her head against the shutter with her hands clasped before her. I can hear my own heart beating, and, I fancy, hers through the stillness. The suspense is fearful. At length she says:

"You have been a long time out of England; you don't read the papers?"

"No." A pause. I believe my heart is beating inside my head.

"You asked me if I was a free woman. I don't pretend to misunderstand why you asked me. I am not a beautiful woman, I never was. But there must be something about me, there is in some women, 'essential femininity' perhaps, that appeals to all men. What I read in your eyes I have seen in many men's before, but, before God, I never tried to rouse it. To-day (with a sob) I can say I am free, yesterday morning I could not. Yesterday my husband gained his case and

divorced me ! ' She closes her eyes and draws in her under-lip to stop its quivering. I want to take her in my arms, but I am afraid to.

" I did not ask you any more than if you were free ! "

" No, but I am afraid you don't quite take in the meaning. I did not divorce my husband, he divorced *me*, he got a decree *nisi* ; do you understand now ? (she is speaking with difficulty) do you know what that implies ? "

I can't stand her face any longer. I take her hands, they are icy cold, and hold them tightly.

" Yes, I know what it implies, that is, I know the legal and social conclusion to be drawn from it—if that is what you mean. But I never asked you for that information. I have nothing to do with your past. You did not exist for me before the day we met on the river. I take you from that day and I ask you to marry me."

I feel her tremble and her hands get suddenly warm. She turns her head and looks at me long and searchingly, then she says :

" Sit down, I want to say something ! "

I obey, and she comes and stands next the chair. I can't help it, I reach up my arm, but she puts it gently down.

" No, you must listen without touching me, I shall go back to the window. I don't want to influence you a bit by any personal magnetism I possess. I want you to listen—I have told you he divorced me ; the co-respondent was an old friend, a friend of my childhood, of my girlhood. He died just after the first application was made, luckily for me. He would have considered my honour before my happiness. I did not defend the case, it wasn't likely—ah, if you knew all ? He proved his case ; given clever counsel, willing witnesses to whom you make it worth while, and no defence, divorce is always attainable even in England. But remember : I figure as an adulteress in every English-speaking paper. If you buy last week's evening papers—do you remember the day I was in town ?"—I nod—" you will see a sketch of me in that day's ; some one, perhaps he, must have given it ; it was from an old photograph. I bought one at Victoria as I came out ; it is funny (with an hysterical laugh) to buy a caricature of one's own poor face at a news-stall. Yet in spite of that I have felt glad. The point for you is that I made no defence to the world, and (with a lifting of her head) I will make no apology, no explanation, no denial to you, now or ever. I am very desolate and your attention came very warm to me, but I don't love you. Perhaps

I could learn to (with a rush of colour), for what you have said to-night, and it is because of that I tell you to weigh what this means. Later, when your care for me will grow into habit, you may chafe at my past. It is from that I would save you."

I hold out my hands, and she comes and puts them aside and takes me by the beard and turns up my face and scans it earnestly. She must have been deceived a good deal. I let her do as she pleases, it is the wisest way with women, and it is good to have her touch me in that way. She seems satisfied. She stands leaning against the arm of the chair and says :

" I must learn first to think of myself as a free woman again ; it almost seems wrong to-day to talk like this ; can you understand that feeling ? "

I nod assent.

" Next time I must be sure, and you must be sure." She lays her fingers on my mouth as I am about to protest. " S-sh ! You shall have a year to think. If you repeat then what you have said to-day, I shall give you your answer. You must not try to find me. I have money. If I am living, I will come here to you. If I am dead you will be told of it. In the year between I shall look upon myself as belonging to you, and render an account if you wish of every hour. You will not be influenced by me in any way, and you will be able to reason it out calmly. If you think better of it, don't come."

I feel there would be no use trying to move her, I simply kiss her hands and say :

" As you will, dear woman, I shall be here."

We don't say any more ; she sits down on a footstool with her head against my knee, and I just smooth it. When the clocks strike ten through the house, she rises and I stand up. I see that she has been crying quietly, poor lonely little soul. I lift her off her feet and kiss her, and stammer out my sorrow at losing her, and she is gone. Next morning the little maid brought me an envelope from the lady, who left by the first train. It held a little grey glove ; that is why I carry it always, and why I haunt the inn and never leave it for longer than a week ; why I sit and dream in the old chair that has a ghost of her presence always ; dream of the spring to come with the May-fly on the wing, and the young summer when midges dance, and the trout are growing fastidious ; when she will come to me across the meadow grass, through the silver haze, as she did before ; come with her grey eyes shining to exchange herself for her little grey glove.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

B. 1860

THE FREEDOM OF THE BLACK-FACED RAM

ON the top of Ringwaak Hill the black-faced ram stood motionless, looking off with mild, yellow eyes across the wooded level, across the scattered farmsteads of the settlement, and across the bright, retreating spirals of the distant river, to that streak of scarlet light on the horizon which indicated the beginning of sunrise. A few paces below him, half-hidden by a grey stump, a green juniper bush, and a mossy brown hillock, lay a white ewe with a lamb at her side. The ewe's jaws moved leisurely, as she chewed her cud and gazed up with comfortable confidence at the sturdy figure of the ram silhouetted against the brightening sky.

This sunrise was the breaking of the black-faced ram's first day in the wilderness. Never before had he stood on an open hill-top and watched the light spread magically over a wide, wild landscape. Up to the morning of the previous day, his three years of life had been passed in protected, green-hedged valley pastures, amid tilled fields and well-stocked barns, beside a lilled water. This rugged, lonely, wide-visioned world into which fortune had so unexpectedly projected him, filled him with wonder. Yet he felt strangely at ease therein. The hedged pastures had never quite suited him ; but here, at length, in the great spaces, he felt at home. The fact was that, alike in character and in outward appearance, he was a reversion to far-off ancestors. He was the product of a freak of heredity.

In the fat-soiled valley-lands, some fifteen miles back of Ringwaak Hill, the farmers had a heavy, long-woolled, hornless strain of sheep, mainly of the Leicester breed, which had been crossed, years back, by an imported Scotch ram of one of the horned, courageous, upland, black-faced varieties. The effect of this hardy cross had apparently all been bred out, save for an added stamina in the resulting stock, which was uniformly white and hornless. When, therefore, a lamb was born with a black face and blackish-grey legs, it was cherished

as a curiosity ; and when, in time, it developed a splendid pair of horns, it became the handsomest ram in all the valley, and a source of great pride to its owner. But when black-faced lambs began to grow common in the hornless and immaculate flocks, the feelings of the valley folks changed, and word went around that the strain of the white-faced must be kept pure. Then it was decreed that the great horned ram should no longer sire the flocks, but be hurried to the doom of his kind and go to the shambles.

Just at this time, however, a young farmer from the backwoods settlement over behind Ringwaak chanced to visit the valley. The sheep of his settlement were not only hornless, but small and light-woolled as well, and the splendid, horned ram took his fancy. Here was a chance to improve his breed. He bought the ram for what he was worth to the butcher, and proudly led him away, over the hills and through the great woods, toward the settlement on the other side of Ringwaak.

The backwoodsman knew right well that a flock of sheep may be driven, but that a single sheep must be led ; so he held his new possession securely by a piece of stout rope about ten feet long. For an hour or two the ram followed with an exemplary docility quite foreign to his independent spirit. He was subdued by the novelty of his surroundings—the hillocky, sloping pastures, and the shadowy solemnity of the forest. Moreover, he perceived, in his dim way, a kind of mastery in this heavy-booted, homespun-clad, tobacco-chewing, grave-eyed man from the backwoods, and for a long time he felt none of his usual pugnacity. But by and by the craving for freedom began to stir in his breast, and the blood of his hill-roving ancestors thrilled toward the wild pastures. The glances which, from time to time, he cast upon the backwoodsman at the other end of the rope became wary, calculating, and hostile. This stalwart form, striding before him, was the one barrier between himself and freedom. Freedom was a thing of which he knew, indeed, nothing—a thing which, to most of his kind, would have seemed terrifying rather than alluring. But to him, with that inherited wildness stirring in his blood, it seemed the thing to be craved before all else.

Presently they came to a little cold spring, bubbling up beside the road and tinkling over the steep bank. The road at this point ran along a hillside, and the slope below the road was clothed with blueberry and other dense shrubs. The backwoodsman was hot and

thirsty. Flinging aside his battered hat, he dropped down on his hands and knees beside the spring and touched his lips to the water.

In this position, still holding the rope in a firm grasp, he had his back to the ram. Moreover, he no longer looked either formidable or commanding. The ram saw his chance. A curious change came over his mild, yellow eyes. They remained yellow, indeed, but became cold, sinister, and almost cruel in their expression.

The backwoodsman, as he drank, held a tight grip on the rope. The ram settled back slightly, till the rope was almost taut. Then he launched himself forward. His movement was straight and swift, as if he had been propelled by a gigantic spring. His massive, broad-horned forehead struck the stooping man with terrific force.

With a grunt of pain and amazement, the man shot sprawling over the bank, and landed, half-stunned, in a clump of blueberry bushes. Dazed and furious, he picked himself up, passed a heavy hand across his scratched, smarting face, and turned to see the ram disappearing among the thickets above the road. His disappointment so overcame his wrath that he forgot to exercise his vigorous backwoods vocabulary, and resumed his homeward way with his head full of plans for the recapture of his prize.

The ram, meanwhile, trailing the length of rope behind him, was galloping madly through the woods. He was intoxicated with his freedom. These rough, wild, lonely places seemed to him his home. With all his love for the wilderness, the instinct which had led him to it was altogether faulty and incomplete. It supplied him with none of the needful forest lore. He had no idea of caution. He had no inkling of fear. He had no conception of the enemies that might lurk in thicket or hollow. He went crashing ahead as if the green world belonged to him, and cared not who might hear the brave sound of his going. Now and then he stepped on the rope, and stumbled; but that was a small matter.

Through dark strips of forest, over rocky, tangled spaces, across slopes burnt barren, his progress was always upward, until, having traversed several swampy vales and shadowy ravines, toward evening he came out upon the empty summit of Ringwaak. On the topmost hillock he took his stand proudly, his massive head and broad, curled horns in splendid relief against the amber sky.

As he stood, surveying his new realm, a low bleat came to him from a sheltered hollow close by, and, looking down, he saw a small

white ewe with a new-born lamb nursing under her flank. Here was his new realm peopled at once. Here were followers of his own kind. He stepped briskly down from his hillock and graciously accepted the homage of the ewe, who snuggled up against him as if afraid at the loneliness and the coming on of night. All night he slept beside the mother and her young, in the sheltered hollow, and kept no watch because he feared no foe. But the ewe kept watch, knowing well what perils might steal upon them in the dark.

As it chanced, however, no midnight prowler visited the summit of Ringwaak Hill, and the first of dawn found the great ram again at his post of observation. It is possible that he had another motive besides his interest in his new, wonderful world. He may have expected the woodsman to follow and attempt his recapture, and resolved not to be taken unawares. Whatever his motive, he kept his post till the sun was high above the horizon, and the dew-wet woods gleamed as if sown with jewels. Then he came down and began to feed with the ewe, cropping the short, thin grass with quick bites and finding it far more sweet than the heavy growths of his old pasture.

Late in the morning, when pasturing was over for the time, the ram and the little ewe lay down in the shade of a steep rock, comfortably chewing their cud, while the lamb slept at its mother's side. The ram, deeply contented, did not observe two grey-brown, stealthy forms creeping along the slope, from bush to rock, and from stump to hillock. But the ewe, ever on the watch, presently caught sight of them, and sprang to her feet with a snort of terror. She knew well enough what a lynx was. Yet for all her terror she had no thought of flight. Her lamb was too young to flee, and she would stay by it in face of any fate.

The ram got up more slowly, turned his head, and eyed the stealthy strangers with grave curiosity. Curiosity, however, changed into hostility as he saw by the ewe's perturbation that the strangers were foes ; and a sinister glitter came into the great gold eyes which shone so brilliantly from his black face.

Seeing themselves discovered, the two lynxes threw aside their cunning and rushed ravenously upon what they counted easy prey. They knew something of the timorous hearts of sheep, and had little expectation of resistance. But being, first of all, hungry rather than angry, they preferred what seemed easiest to get. It was upon the lamb and the ewe that they sprang, ignoring the ram contemptuously.

One thing which they had not reckoned with, however, was the temper of the ewe. Before one fierce claw could reach her lamb, she had butted the assailant so fiercely in the flank that he forgot his purpose and turned with a snarl of rage to rend her. Meanwhile the other lynx, springing for her neck, had experienced the unexpected. He had been met by the lightning charge of the ram, fair in the ribs, and hurled sprawling into a brittle, pointed tangle of dead limbs sticking up from the trunk of a fallen tree.

Having delivered this most effective blow, the ram stepped back a pace or two, mincing on his slender feet, and prepared to repeat it. The lynx was struggling frantically among the branches, which stuck into him and tore his fine fur. Just in time to escape the second assault he got free—but free not for fight but for flight. One tremendous, wildly contorted leap landed him on the other side of the dead tree ; and, thoroughly cowed, he scurried away down the hill-side.

The ram at once turned his attention to the ewe and her antagonist. But the second lynx, who had not found his task so simple as he had expected it to be, had no stomach left for one more difficult. The ewe was bleeding about the head, and would, of course, if she had been left to fight it out, have been worsted in a very short time. But the enemy had felt the weight of her blows upon his ribs, and had learned his lesson. For just a fraction of a second he turned, and defied the ram with a screeching snarl. But when that horned, black, battering head pitched forward at him he bounded aside like a furry grey ball and clambered to the top of the rock. Here he crouched for some moments, snarling viciously, his tufted ears set back against his neck, and his stump of a tail twitching with rage, while the ram minced to and fro beneath him, stamping defiance with his dainty hoofs. All at once the big cat doubled upon itself, slipped down the other side of the rock, and went gliding away through the stumps and hillocks like a grey shadow ; and the ram, perhaps to conceal his elation, fell to grazing as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. The ewe, on the other hand, seeing the danger so well past, took no thought of her torn face, but set herself to comfort and reassure the trembling lamb.

After this, through the slow, bright hours while the sun swung hotly over Ringwaak, the ram and his little family were undisturbed. An eagle, wheeling, wheeling, wheeling in the depths of the blue, looked down and noted the lamb. But he had no thought of attacking so well guarded a prey. The eagle had a wider outlook than others of

the wild kindred, and he knew from of old many matters which the lynxes of Ringwaak had never learned till that day.

There were other visitors that came and glanced at the little family during the quiet content of their cud-chewing. A weasel ran restlessly over a hillock and peered down upon them with hard, bright eyes. The big ram, with his black face and huge, curling horns, was a novel phenomenon, and the weasel disappeared behind the hillock, only to appear again much nearer, around a clump of weeds. His curiosity was mingled with malicious contempt, till the ram chanced to rise and shake his head. Then the weasel saw the rope that wriggled from the ram's neck. Was it some new and terrible kind of snake? The weasel respected snakes when they were large and active; so he forgot his curiosity and slipped away from the dangerous neighbourhood.

The alarm of the weasel, however, was nothing to that of the wood-mice. While the ram was lying down they came out of their secret holes and played about securely, seeming to realise that the big animal's presence was a safeguard to them. But when he moved, and they saw the rope trail sinuously behind him through the scanty grass, they were almost paralysed with panic. Such a snake as that would require all the wood-mice on Ringwaak to assuage his appetite. They fairly fell backward into their burrows, where they crouched quivering in the darkest recesses, not daring to show their noses again for hours.

Neither weasel nor wood-mice, nor the chickadees which came to eye him saucily, seemed to the big ram worth a moment's attention. But when a porcupine, his quills rattling and bristling till he looked as big around as a half-bushel basket, strolled aimlessly by, the ram was interested and rose to his feet. The little, deep-set eyes of the porcupine passed over him with supremest indifference, and their owner began to gnaw at the bark of a hemlock sapling which grew at one side of the rock. To this gnawing he devoted his whole attention, with an eagerness that would have led one to think he was hungry—as, indeed, he was, not having had a full meal for nearly half an hour. The porcupine, of all nature's children, is the best provided for, having the food he loves lying about him at all seasons. Yet he is for ever eating, as if famine were in ambush for him just over the next hillock.

Seeing the high indifference of this small, bristling stranger, the ram stepped up and was just about to sniff at him inquiringly. Had

he done so, the result would have been disastrous. He would have got a slap in the face from the porcupine's active and armed tail ; and his face would have straightway been transformed into a sort of anguished pincushion, stuck full of piercing, finely barbed quills. He would have paid dear for his ignorance of woodcraft—perhaps with the loss of an eye, or even with starvation from a quill working through into his gullet. But fortunately for him the ewe understood the peculiarities of porcupines. Just in time she noted his danger, and rudely butted him aside. He turned upon her in a fume of amazed indignation ; but in some way she made him understand that the porcupine was above all law, and not to be trifled with even by the lords of the wilderness. Very sulkily he lay down again, and the porcupine went on chiselling hemlock bark, serenely unconscious of the anger in the inscrutable yellow eyes that watched him from the ram's black face.

When the shadows grew long and luminous, toward evening, the ram, following some unexplained instinct, again mounted the topmost point of Ringwaak, and stood like a statue gazing over the vast, warm-coloured solitude of his new domain. His yellow eyes were placid with a great content. A little below him, the white lamb wobbling on weak legs at her side, the ewe pastured confidently, secure in the proved prowess of her protector. As the sun dropped below the far-off western rim of the forest, it seemed as if one wide wave of lucent rose-violet on a sudden flooded the world. Everything on Ringwaak—the ram's white fleece, the grey, bleached stumps, the brown hillocks, the green hollows and juniper clumps and poplar saplings—took on a palpitating aerial stain. Here and there in the distance the coils of the river gleamed clear gold ; and overhead, in the hollow amber-and-lilac arch of sky, the high-wandering night-hawks swooped with the sweet twang of smitten strings.

Down at the foot of the northern slope of Ringwaak lay a dense cedar swamp. Presently, out from the green fringe of the cedars, a bear thrust his head and cast a crafty glance about the open. Seeing the ram on the hill-top and the ewe with her lamb feeding near by, he sank back noiselessly into the cover of the cedars, and stole around toward the darkening eastern slope, where a succession of shrubby copses ran nearly to the top of the hill.

The bear was rank, rusty-coated, old, and hungry ; and he loved sheep. He was an adept in stalking this sweet-fleshed, timorous

quarry, and breaking its neck with a well-directed blow as it dashed past him in a panic. Emerging from the swamp, he crept up the hill, taking cunning advantage of every bush, stump, and boulder. For all his awkward-looking bulk, he moved as lightly as a cat, making himself small, and twisting and flattening and effacing himself; and never a twig was allowed to snap, or a stone to clatter, under his broad, unerring feet.

About this time it chanced that the backwoodsman, who had been out nearly all day hunting for his lost prize, approached the edge of the forest at the other side of Ringwaak—and saw the figure of the ram against the sky. Then, seeing also the ewe with the lamb beside her, he knew that the game was his.

Below the top of the hill there was not a scrap of cover for a distance of perhaps twenty paces. The bear crept to the very last bush, the ram being occupied with the world at a distance, and the ewe busy at her pasturing. Behind the bush—a thick, spreading juniper—the bear crouched motionless for some seconds, his little red eyes aglow, and his jaws beginning to slaver with eagerness. Then selecting the unconscious ewe, because he knew she was not likely to desert the lamb, he rushed upon his intended victim.

The ewe, as it chanced, was about thirty-five or forty feet distant from the enemy, as he lunged out, black and appalling, from behind the juniper. At the same time the ram was not more than twenty or twenty-five feet distant, straight above the lamb, in a direction at right angles to the path of the bear. The ewe looked up with a startled bleat, wheeled, sprang nimbly before the lamb, and faced her doom dauntlessly, with lowered head.

The ram's mild gaze changed in a flash to one of cold, yellow savagery at the sight of the great black beast invading his kingdom. Down went his conquering head. For just a fraction of a second his sturdy body sagged back, as if he were about to sit down. This, so to speak, was the bending of the bow. Then he launched himself straight down the slope, all his strength, his weight, and the force of gravity combining to drive home that mighty stroke.

The bear had never, in all his experience with sheep, encountered one whose resistance was worth taking into account. The defiance of the ewe was less than nothing to him. But as he saw, from the corner of his eye, the huge bulk plunging down upon him, he hesitated, and half turned, with great paw upraised for a finishing blow.

He turned not quite in time, however, and his defence was not quite strenuous enough for the emergency. He struck like lightning, as a bear always can, but just before the stroke could find its mark the ram's armed forehead crashed into his ribs. The blow, catching him as it did, was irresistible. His claws tore off a patch of wool and skin, and ploughed red furrows across the ram's shoulder—but the next instant he was sprawling, his breath jarred from his lungs, against a stump some ten feet down the slope.

As the bear struggled to his feet, furious but half-daunted with amazement, the ram danced backward a pace or two on his nimble feet, as if showing off, and then delivered his second charge. The bewildered bear was again caught unready, irresolute as to whether he should fight or flee; and again he was knocked headlong, a yard or two further down the slope. His was not the dauntless spirit that most of his kindred would have shown in such a case, and he would willingly have made his escape at once if he had seen his way quite clear to do so. But at this moment, while he hesitated, he heard a man's voice shouting loudly, and saw the tall backwoodsman running toward him up the hill. This sight turned his alarm into a blind panic. His feet seemed to acquire wings as he tore madly away among the thickets. When he was hidden by the leafage, his path could still be followed by the crashing of dry branches and the clattering of loosened stones.

The woodsman had seen the whole incident, and was wild with enthusiasm over the prowess of his prize. Bears had been the most dreaded scourge of the settlement sheep-farmers, but now, as he proudly said to himself, he had a ram that could "lick a b'ar silly!" He bore no grudge on account of his discomfiture that morning beside the spring, but rather thought of it with appreciation as a further evidence of his favourite's cunning and prowess; and he foresaw, with a chuckle, that there were painful surprises in store for the bears of the Ringwaak range. He had made a wise purchase indeed when he saved that splendid beast from the butcher.

Hearing the man's voice, the ram had halted in dismay just when he was about to charge the bear a third time. He had no mind to go again into captivity. But, on the other hand, for all his lordliness of spirit, he felt that the man was his master. At first he lowered his head threateningly, as if about to attack; but when the backwoodsman shouted at him there was an authority in those tones which he

could not withstand, and he sullenly drew aside. With a good-natured laugh, the man picked the lamb up in his arms, whereupon the mother stepped timidly to his side, evidently having no fear. The man rubbed her nose kindly, and stroked her ears, and gave her something from his pocket which she ate greedily ; and, as the ram looked on, the anger gradually faded out from his yellow eyes. At length the man turned and walked slowly down the hill, carrying the lamb. The ewe followed, crowding as close to him as she could, and stumbling as she went because her eyes were fixed upon her little one.

The ram hesitated. He looked at the hillside, the woods, and the sky beginning to grow chill with the onrush of twilight. Then he looked at the retreating figures. Suddenly he saw his world growing empty and desolate. With an anxious bleat he trotted after the ewe, and took his docile place a few feet behind the man's heels. The man glanced over his shoulders, and a smile of pleasure softened his rugged face. In a few moments the little procession disappeared in the woods, moving toward the settlement, and Ringwaak Hill was left solitary in the dusk, with the lonely notes of the night-hawks twanging over it.

RALPH CONNOR

B. 1860

THE PILOT AT SWAN CREEK

CATTLEMEN of the Swan Creek country still speak of the winter of the big blizzard. For three days it raged over the hills and down the coolies, sweeping clean before it cattle and horses by the hundred to destruction. It was that blizzard that piled up more than a hundred and fifty of the XL cattle over the cut bank at the bend of the Little Porcupine ; and there they were found a ghastly mass, after the first Chinook had licked up the snow banks. Not for the loss of cattle do I remember it, but for a loss that cut deep into my heart.

How well I remember the springlike airs of that bright December morning. A warm Chinook blew gently down through the hazy hills from the purple mountains at the horizon, and over all the sky arched a cloudless blue. We were sitting, the Pilot and I, with the door of our shack wide open to the sunny air, when Bill rode up.

" Fine spring day," said the Pilot.

" Too spring for me," answered Bill, with an ominous glance at the sky.

" You're pretty hard to please, Bill," said the Pilot, " I could stand about six weeks of this."

" Wall, you won't get six hours of it."

" Six hours ? Why not ? "

" Wall, if I kin read signs, there's the tallest kind of a blizzard followin' up this blasted Chinook," answered Bill.

" How do you know ? " said the Pilot doubtfully.

" Everyhow," replied Bill, before whose experienced eye the earth and sky lay like an open book. " Why, look at them hills ; look at that mist."

" You don't call that mist," broke in the Pilot—" that's a lovely haze."

" Haze, is it ? " drawled Bill ; " wall, 'taint the kind of haze I aspire to this time o' year." Then he went on, " No ! before you're

six hours older you'll see a blizzard that'll blow till you can't see your feet. Coming past the cañon trail—by the way, the old man up there is laid up rather—just along by the upper trail there, you know, I seen some deer makin' fer the bluffs. The cattle are dreadful oneasy, bunchin' and sniffin'. Oh, you just bet your gold dust there ain't no slouch of a blizzard a-hustlin' on the back of that there lovely haze."

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"Well, I'm goin' to run a bunch of cattle off the open into a coolie, where they won't be drove into next week, and where we kin find them without diggin'."

"Is the Old Timer in bed?" asked the Pilot.

"Oh, jest layin' round, you know. Nothin' too serious, I guess," replied Bill.

"Wall, I'm off," he continued, wheeling his broncho, "better make this your day at home. So long!" and off he went at a lope.

"Good-bye, Bill; come back for supper," sang out the Pilot after him.

"You watch me," he called back over his shoulder.

As the morning wore on, the haze deepened over the hills, and the sun lost its kindly, genial look and glared at the world with an angry, bloodshot eye. The Chinook wind fell into a dead calm. It may have been that Bill's ominous words impressed me, but it seemed that nature was gradually steadying herself for some tremendous shock. The Pilot could not settle to his work. He wandered about the room, looking out now at the glaring sun, and again at the distant purple mountains.

"I don't like it," he said uneasily, "and Gwen is alone up there with her sick father."

"Oh, he is not very ill," I said, rather more carelessly than I felt, and I saw that he detected the false tone in my voice.

After another restless half-hour I said, "I shall run across to the Muirs'. I promised to take dinner with them to-day. I'll be back right after." He nodded his head, still looking anxiously at the sky, which was beginning to take on a crimson tint.

I could not explain my own feeling of anxiety during the next hour, and as soon as I could decently leave I hurried back to my shack, I found the Pilot gone. On the table this note lay:—

"MY DEAR CONNOR—I can't rest here; Gwen may need help, and I have determined to ride up before the storm breaks to the Old Timer's ranch. Get Bill a bung-up supper. He will be tired and hungry.—Yours,
THE PILOT."

I looked out of the window. Large, soft flakes were falling out of a liver-coloured sky, and the wind was rising. I hurried down to the Stopping Place stable, and found old Latour at the door looking anxiously up at the sky.

"He's near half-way dere," he said.

"Who?"

"De Pilot. I tell heem he's fool for go, but he say he's better be fool nor coward." Old Latour was quite excited. "Dat leel gurl, he's fader go seeck. De Pilot say, 'he go up to see heem.' I say, 'he no good see heem. Dis awful beeg bleazard he's not get trou.' 'How long he las'?' he say. 'Free day, nebbe,' I say. By Jeorje, he's mad for go den. 'Tree day, all alone. Not moush,' he say, and pull down hees saddle. I mak heem tak Louis. Das good pony for keep de trail. He's put hees nose into de storm. Noder feller he's put hees tail. Oh dat fine pony, Louis."

It seemed to comfort the old man a good deal to feel that the Pilot was riding a pony that could put his nose into the storm and overcome the tendency of the native cayuse to turn tail to it. I was very anxious, in spite of old Latour's confidence in his pony.

"How long has he been gone?" I asked.

"'Bout half an hour, yes, more," he said.

I looked at my watch; it was three o'clock. The snow was now coming down in long, slanting lines, and beginning to bite. The sky was almost hidden, and had lost all light and colour.

"He ought to be about the cañon now," I said, "and then he'll be all right."

"Yes," said the old man, "he's all right nuff, when he's pass de upper trail. Das bad spot dere."

I knew the place well. The highest point on the whole way, where the trail to the Meredith ranch leaves the main Porcupine trail.

"He'll be der now, sure nuff," continued he, pulling out his big silver watch from his waistband.

"I hope so," I said with all my heart, for even as I spoke I heard a strange sound, such as had never come to my ears before. It was

not a roar, it was too soft for that. There was a hissing, beating sound, as if unseen wings, great and innumerable, were sweeping down upon us; an awesome heart-smiting sound. A moment more and the blizzard had struck. I had to fight my way step by step to my shack, and by the time I had gained my door the world had vanished from my sight behind this whirling, shimmering curtain of choking, blinding snow. I had hardly got my fire going when the door was pushed open and in came Bill.

"Wall!" he called out, "how d'ye fancy your lovely haze now? Ain't this a sneezer?" He looked round the room, then stared at me and said, "Whar's the Pilot?"

I handed him the note, saying, "I was down at Muir's, and found this when I came back."

He heard it through slowly, and then asked, "When did he start?"

"About half-past two, old Latour said."

He said no more, but took up his leather coat which he had just laid off.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"I ain't goin' to sit here if I know myself, with the Pilot somewhere into this blizzard," he answered almost savagely. "Got any brandy?"

"A flask full."

"Roll up a pair o' blankets, and git me half-a-dozen biscuits. I'm goin' down to the stable. Kin you find your way down there? Bring 'em down."

I felt the bitterness in his voice, and I knew he was blaming me for not following the Pilot at once.

In ten minutes I was at the stable with the blankets done up in two rolls and the biscuits and brandy in my pocket. I found Bill saddling the Duke's black broncho, Jingo, who, having been in the stable for two weeks, was like to knock things to pieces. Bill, however, paid no attention to the antics, but stood up close to him while he cinched the saddle and lashed on the one blanket behind it. The black brute squealed and began to plunge, but Bill kept close to him, tying his tongs as regardless of his antics as if he were a lamb. When all was snug and taut he jerked the tie-line loose, flung the long bridle reins over the head of the rearing animal, then with a fierce grip he seized with both hands the rings of the bit, ran the horse back out of

his stall, and, with a mighty wrench, hurled him clear off his feet on to his side.

"Git up!" he yelled, and Jingo sprang to his feet, more surprised and humbled than he had ever been in his whole previous history. "Stand thar, will you!" said Bill in a terrible voice; and Jingo stood quite still.

"What are you going to do?" asked Bill, seeing me with my horse saddled and all ready.

"Going to follow you," I said shortly, for his words and manner had so stung me that I had resolved to follow him till I dropped.

He looked at me a moment in silence, then suddenly stretching out his hand, he said in a husky voice:

"Ye're all right, pard; I take it all back," and without a word he swung himself on to his saddle and rode out into the blizzard.

The air was thick with whirling snow, the wind seemed to be blowing from every quarter at once. Every vestige of earth and sky was shut out from sight by the snow-cloud that seemed to wrap one's head about, filling eyes and throat and shutting off the breath. By what means he found and kept the trail I know not, but not once did Bill falter. On he pressed against and through that wall of blinding, choking snow. After the first quarter of a mile, during which it was difficult to keep him in sight, Jingo settled down into a long, easy, steady lope, as if he knew that serious business was in hand. Occasionally he dropped the beaten track, but a plunge or two and he was on the trail again. Keeping his black tail just before my pony's nose, I had no serious trouble in fighting my way through the blizzard. It is not the cold, nor the depth of the snow, nor the stress of the driving storm that makes the blizzard dangerous. It is its power to shut out the world and to utterly bewilder that strikes terror to the heart. Some men and some horses can make their way, however, without hesitation. Such a man was Bill, and such a horse Jingo.

For an hour we fought along, now slowly feeling our way and then breaking into a lope where the lie of the ground made the trail easier to keep. Suddenly Bill pulled up, and, dismounting, faced Jingo about and gave me his reins to hold.

"Keep 'em just as they are," he said. "I rather think the trail breaks off about here into the cañon. Mind you keep 'em just so. I don't want to lose my direction."

Even as he spoke he passed out of sight, but in a moment or two he reappeared and said :

" It's pretty tough keepin' your bearin's when you're tryin' to find a trail. I want you to count ten and then holler and keep on till I come back."

In a few minutes—they seemed hours—he came back and took his horse.

" You stay here till you hear me holler," he said, and disappeared again.

Soon his call came, and in a short time we were following the trail down into the cañon. Here the track was easier to find, and before long we were at the Old Timer's door.

" I guess I'll just peek in," said Bill in a low voice ; " there ain't no occasion to make no row, case he ain't there."

He opened the door gently and passed in, but came out almost immediately.

" The good Lord help us, he ain't been there," he said with a kind of gasp.

" You didn't see Gwen ? " I asked.

" No. Saw Joe. Look here, I'm goin' back to that upper trail," he added. " I think p'r'aps I'd be better alone."

" You go to thunder ! " I replied ; " don't lie to me. Anyway, I'm going with you."

He came close up to me.

" You're a white man," he said earnestly, " but I ain't comin' back till I find him, and there ain't no need for you——" He paused.

For an answer I turned my horse towards the gate. Bill swung himself up into his saddle, and in a few strides Jingo was leading me once more.

" Blamed if you ain't white—clear to the bone," he said, turning in his saddle towards me, and somehow his words gave me a great thrill of joy and put new courage into my heart.

Back through the cañon we rode and up to the open again. Once more Bill found the upper trail and came hurrying back to me.

" We ain't got half a minute to spare," he said anxiously. " It'll be dark in half an hour, and then God Almighty help us."

We went along at what seemed to me a reckless pace. But the black horse never swerved from his long, steady lope. After we had

gone about half a mile Jingo suddenly stopped short. Before I could ask the cause, Bill was off and down in the snow exploring.

"Guess we've struck the scent," he called out. "Come here."

There, half covered by the drifting snow, lay a sleigh overturned, with its load strewn about. "Whar's the team? Whar's the driver?" Bill shouted to me. "Thar's where the Pilot is. You bet he's monkeyin' round pullin' some fool out o' the snow."

He dropped on his hands and knees, feeling all about, and finally vanishing into the darkening mist of blinding snow.

"Come on!" I heard him call; and on coming up I found him with a wisp of hay in his hand. "They've gone down the coolie, I do believe. Come on!" he cried. He was excited as I had never seen him before. He flung himself into his saddle and shouted to Jingo, who plunged headlong down the coolie. I followed as best I could, and after a few minutes' hard work came upon Bill standing at his horse's head, in the shelter of a poplar bluff. "Listen!" he said, holding up his hand, and we stood listening for our lives. But only the hissing boom of the blizzard beat upon our ears.

"I swear I heard something just as I—there——" He put up his hand again, and through the storm came the sound of a voice singing:

God in the midst of her doth dwell,
Nothing shall her remove.

Bill dropped on his knees, and taking off his cap he sobbed out: "Thank the good God! That's him. It's the Pilot." Then he sprang to his feet and yelled: "Hello! You dod-gasted fool-hunter, where in thunder an' lightnin' air you, anyway?"

"Hello, Bill! Here you are, old boy." In the bluff we found them; the Pilot livid with cold and near the last stage of exhaustion, holding up a stranger as they tramped wearily the path they had beaten around the horses to keep themselves from freezing to death.

"Oh, Bill," cried the Pilot, making a brave attempt at a smile, "you're a great man!"

Bill held him at arm's length a moment, and then said solemnly:

"Wall! I've come into contact with some fools, idjits, blanked idjits"—Bill had lost his grip of himself for a moment—"in my life, but such a blanked, conglomerated idjit it hasn't been my pleasure to mix with up to this point in my career."

The Pilot by this time was in fits of hysterical laughter. "And," continued Bill, with increased solemnity, "I cherish the conviction——"

"Oh, Bill," shrieked the Pilot, "for Heaven's sake, stop! You'll kill me if you say another word." Then Bill paused, looked anxiously into the Pilot's face, and saying, "Here! Let's get home," rolled a blanket round him and set him on Louis.

"You won't need your hands; he'll follow all right," he said as he mounted Jingo. "Come on."

"Wait, Bill!" cried the Pilot. "What about this man? He's almost played out."

"Played out, is he?" snorted Bill contemptuously. "If he's as strong as he smells he ought to get through. Any man that don't know when to leave whisky alone shouldn't travel without his keeper."

"But we can't leave him here!" pleaded the Pilot.

"Can't, eh! You watch my smoke," said Bill. "If he can't follow with two horses he can't with three."

"Oh, I say, Bill! take him along," said the Pilot earnestly.

"Look here!" cried Bill impatiently, "do you think I'm a blasted snow-plough? Come on! Every second counts. He'll follow all right." And so he did, and fighting our way through the storm, and dark, and cold now grown intense, we made the cañon, and soon after the Old Timer's door.

Bill carried the Pilot in and laid him on a pile of skins before the fire. He was not badly frozen, but he was utterly exhausted. During the three days of the blizzard he lay weak and faint, nursed by Bill day and night. With all a mother's tenderness in touch and tone, Bill waited on his every wish, breaking forth now and then in loving wrath upon his folly for going back after the stranger.

"But he would have been lost, Bill," said the Pilot gently, after one of Bill's outbursts.

"Wall, let him," growled Bill.

"Bill," answered the Pilot softly "we were lost once, you know."

And Bill turned and looked away and said not a word, remembering, I have no doubt, Him who came to seek the lost. The Pilot never was the same again, but long after, when the first bitterness of his going from us was over, Bill said one day to me: "That's how he got his death, seekin' after that lost idjit. It was all blamed foolishness, but I guess p'r'aps that's the best after all."

SIR GILBERT PARKER, BART.

B. 1861

THE CRIMSON FLAG

TALK and think as one would, The Woman was striking to see ; with marvellous flaxen hair and a joyous violet eye. She was all pulse and dash ; but she was as much less beautiful than the manager's wife as Tom Liffey was as nothing beside the manager himself ; and one would care little to name the two women in the same breath if the end had been different. When The Woman came to Little Goshen there were others of her class there, but they were of a commoner sort and degree. She was the queen of a lawless court, though she never, from first to last, spoke to one of those others who were her people ; neither did she hold commerce with any of the ordinary miners, save Pretty Pierre—but he was more gambler than miner—and he went, when the matter was all over, and told her some things that stripped her soul naked before her eyes. Pierre had a wonderful tongue. It was only the gentlemen-diggers—and there were many of them at Little Goshen—who called upon her when the lights were low ; and then there was a good deal of muffled mirth in the white house among the pines. The rougher miners made no quarrel with this, for the gentlemen-diggers were popular enough ; they were merely sarcastic and humorous, and said things which, coming to The Woman's ears, made her very merry ; for she herself had an abundant wit, and had spent wild hours with clever men.

She did not resent the playful insolence that sent a dozen miners to her house in the dead of night with a crimson flag, which they quietly screwed to her roof, and paint, with which they deftly put a wide stripe of scarlet round the cornice, and another round the basement. In the morning, when she saw what had been done, she would not have the paint removed nor the flag taken down ; for, she said, the stripes looked very well, and the other would show that she was always at home.

Now, the notable thing was that Heldon, the manager, was in The Woman's house on the night this was done. Tom Liffey, the lumpish guide and trapper, saw him go in ; and, days afterwards,

he said to Pierre : " Divils me own ! but this is a bad hour for Heldon's wife—she with a face like a princess and eyes like the fear o' God. Nivir a wan did I see like her, since I came out of Erin with a clatter of hoofs behind me and a squall on the sea before. There's wimmin there wid cheeks like roses and buttermilk, and a touch that'd make y'r heart pound on y'r ribs ; but none that's grander than Heldon's wife. To lave her for that other, standin' hip-high in her shame, is temptin' the fires of Heaven, say I, that basted the sinners o' Sodom."

Pierre, pausing between the whiffs of a cigarette, said : " So ? But you know more of catching foxes in winter, and climbing mountains in summer, and the grip of the arm of an Injin girl, than of these things. You are young, quite young in the world, Tom Liffey."

" Young I may be, with a glint o' grey at me temples from a night o' trouble beyand in the hills ; but I'm the man, an' the only man, that's climbed to the glacier-top—God's Playground, as they call it ; and nivir a dirty trick have I done to Injin girl or any other ; and be damned to you there ! say I."

" Sometimes I think you are as foolish as Shon M'Gann," compassionately replied the half-breed. " You have almighty virtue, and you did that brave trick of the glacier ; but great men have fallen. You are not dead yet. Still, as you say, Heldon's wife is noble to see. She is grave and cold, and speaks little ; but there is something in her which is not of the meek of the earth. Some women say nothing, and suffer and forgive, and take such as Heldon back to their bosoms ; but there are others—— I remember a woman—well, it is no matter, it was long ago ; but they two are as if born of one mother ; and what comes of this will be mad play—mad play."

" Ov coorse his wife may not get to know of it, and——"

" Not get to know it ! 'Tsh, you are a child——"

" Faith, I'll say what I think, and that in y'r face ! Maybe he'll tire of the handsome rip—for handsome she is, like a yellow lily growin' out o' mud—and go back to his lawful wife, that believes he's at the mines when he's drinkin' and colloquin' wid a fly-away."

Pierre slowly wheeled till he had the Irishman straight in his eye. Then he said in a low, cutting tone : " I suppose your heart aches for the beautiful lady, eh ? " Here he screwed his slight forefinger into Tom's breast ; then he added sharply : " By the holy Heaven, but you make me angry ! You talk too much. Such men get into trouble. And keep down the riot of that sympathy of yours, Tom Liffey, or

you'll walk on the edge of knives one day. And now take an inch of whisky and ease your anxious soul. *Voilà !*" After a moment he added : " Women work these things out for themselves."

Then the two left the hut, and amiably strolled together to the centre of the village, where they parted.

It was as Pierre had said : the woman would work the thing out for herself. Later that evening Heldon's wife stood cloaked and veiled in the shadows of the pines, facing the house with The Crimson Flag. Her eyes shifted ever from the door to the flag, which was stirred by the light breeze. Once or twice she shivered as with cold, but instantly she stilled again, and watched. It was midnight. Here and there beyond in the village a light showed, and straggling voices floated faintly towards her. For a long time no sound came from the house. But at last she heard a laugh. At that she drew something from her pocket, and held it firmly in her hand. Once she turned and looked at another house far up on the hill where lights were burning. It was Heldon's house—her home. A sharp sound as of anguish and anger escaped her ; then she fastened her eyes on the door in front of her.

At that moment Tom Liffey was standing with his hands on his hips looking at Heldon's home on the hill ; and he said some rumbling words, then strode down on the road, and suddenly paused near the wife. He did not see her. He faced the door at which she was looking, and shook his fist at it.

" A murrain on y'r sowl ! " said he, " as there's plague in y'r body, and hell in the slide of y'r feet, like the trail of the red spider. And out o' that come ye, Heldon, for I know y're there. Out of that, ye beast ! . . . But how *can* ye go back—you that's rolled in *that* sewer—to the loveliest woman that ever trod the neck o' the world ! Damned y' are in every joint o' y'r frame, and damned is y'r sowl, say I, for bringing sorrow to her ; and I hate you as much for that, as I could worship her was she not your wife and a lady o' blood, God save her ! "

Then shaking his fist once more, he swung away slowly down the road. During this the wife's teeth held together as though they were of a piece. She looked after Tom Liffey and smiled ; but it was a dreadful smile.

" He worships me, that common man—worships me ! " she said. " This man who was my husband has shamed me, left me. Well——"

The door of the house opened ; a man came out. His wife leaned a little forward, and something clicked ominously in her hand. But a voice came up the road towards them through the clear air—the voice of Tom Liffey. The husband paused to listen ; the wife mechanically did the same. The husband remembered this afterwards ; it was the key to, and the beginning of, a tragedy. These are the words the Irishman sang :

She was a queen, she stood up there before me,
My blood went roarin' when she touched my hand ;
She kissed me on the lips, and then she swore me
To die for her—and happy was the land !

A new and singular look came into her face. It transformed her. " That," she said in a whisper to herself—" that ! He knows the way."

As her husband turned towards his home, she turned also. He heard the rustle of garments, and he could just discern the cloaked figure in the shadows. He hurried on ; the figure flitted ahead of him. A fear possessed him in spite of his will. He turned back. The figure stood still for a moment, then followed him. He braced himself, faced about, and walked towards it ; it stopped and waited. He had not the courage. He went back again swiftly towards the house he had left. Again he looked behind him. The figure was standing, not far, in the pines. He wheeled suddenly towards the house, turned a key in the door, and entered.

Then the wife went to that which had been her home. Heldon did not go thither until the first flush of morning. Pierre, returning from an all-night sitting at cards, met him, and saw the careworn look on his face. The half-breed smiled. He knew that the event was doubling on the man. When Heldon reached his house, he went to his wife's room. It was locked. Then he walked down to his mines with a miserable shame and anger at his heart. He did not pass The Crimson Flag. He went by another way.

That evening, in the dusk, a woman knocked at Tom Liffey's door. He opened it.

" Are you alone ? " she said.

" I am alone, lady."

" I will come in," she added.

" You will—come in ? " he faltered.

She drew near him, and reached out and gently caught his hand.

" Ah ! " he said, with a sound almost like a sob in its intensity, and the blood flushed to his hair.

He stepped aside, and she entered. In the light of the candle her eye burned into his, but her face wore a shining coldness. She leaned towards him.

" You said you could worship me," she whispered, " and you cursed *him*. Well—worship me—altogether—and that will curse him, as he has killed me."

" Dear lady ! " he said, in an awed, overwhelmed murmur ; and he fell back to the wall.

She came towards him. " Am I not beautiful ? " she urged. She took his hand. His eyes swam with hers. But his look as different from hers, though he could not know that. His was the madness of a man in a dream ; hers was a painful thing. The Furies dwelt in her. She softly lifted his hand above his head, and whispered : " Swear." And she kissed him. Her lips were icy, though he did not think so. The blood tossed in his veins. He swore ; but, doing so, he could not conceive *all* that would be required of him. He was hers, body and soul, and she had resolved on a grim thing. . . . In the darkness, they left the hut and passed into the woods, and slowly up through the hills.

Heldon returned to his home that night to find it empty. There were no servants. There was no wife. Her cat and dog lay dead upon the hearth-rug. Her clothing was cut into strips. Her wedding-dress was a charred heap on the fireplace. Her jewellery lay molten with it. Her portrait had been torn from its frame.

An intolerable fear possessed him. Drops of sweat hung on his forehead and his hands. He fled towards the town. He bit his fingernails till they bled as he passed the house in the pines. He lifted his arm as if the flappings of The Crimson Flag were blows in his face.

At last he passed Tom Liffey's hut. He saw Pierre coming from it. The look on the gambler's face was one of gloomy wonder. His fingers trembled as he lighted a cigarette, and that was an unusual thing. The form of Heldon edged within the light. Pierre dropped the match and said to him : " You are looking for your wife ? "

Heldon bowed his head. The other threw open the door of the hut. " Come in here," he said. They entered. Pierre pointed to a woman's hat on the table. " Do you know that ? " he asked, huskily, for he was moved. But Heldon only nodded dazedly.

Pierre continued : " I was to have met Tom Liffey here to-night. He is not here. You hoped—I suppose—to see your wife in your—home. She is not there. He left a word on paper for me. I have torn it up. Writing is the enemy of man. But I know where he is gone. I know also where your wife has gone."

Heldon's face was of a hateful paleness. . . . They passed out into the night.

" Where are you going ? " Heldon said.

" To God's Playground, if we can get there."

" To God's Playground ? To the glacier-top ? You are mad."

" No, but *he* and *she* were mad. Come on." Then he whispered something, and Heldon gave a great cry, and they plunged into the woods.

In the morning the people of Little Goshen, looking towards the glacier, saw a flag (they knew afterwards that it was crimson) flying on it. Near it were two human figures. A miner, looking through a field-glass, said that one figure was crouching by the flagstaff, and that it was a woman. The other figure near was a man. As the morning wore on, they saw upon a crag of ice below the sloping glacier two men looking upwards towards the flag. One of them seemed to shriek out, and threw up his hands, and made as if to rush forward ; but the other drew him back.

Heldon knew what revenge and disgrace may be at their worst. In vain he tried to reach God's Playground. Only one man knew the way, and he was dead upon it—with Heldon's wife : two shameless suicides. . . . When he came down from the mountain the hair upon his face was white, though that upon his head remained black as it had always been. And those frozen figures stayed there like statues with that other crimson flag ; until, one day, a great-bodied wind swept out of the north, and, in pity, carried them down a bottomless fissure.

But long before this happened, The Woman had fled from Little Goshen in the night, and her house was burned to the ground.

THE ABSURD ROMANCE OF P'TITE LOUISON

SIR GILBERT PARKER

THE five brothers lived with Louison, three miles from Pontiac, and Medallion came to know them first through having sold them, at an auction, a slice of an adjoining farm. He had been invited to their home, intimacy had grown, and afterwards, stricken with a severe illness, he had been taken into the household and kept there till he was well again. The night of his arrival, Louison, the sister, stood with a brother on either hand—Octave and Florian—and received him with a courtesy more stately than usual, an expression of the reserve and modesty of her single state. This maidenly dignity was at all times shielded by the five brothers, who treated her with a constant and reverential courtesy. There was something signally suggestive in their homage, and Medallion concluded at last that it was paid not only to the sister, but to something that gave her great importance in their eyes.

He puzzled long, and finally decided that Louison had a romance. There was something which suggested it in the way they said "P'tite Louison"; in the manner they avoided all gossip regarding marriages and marriage-feasting; in the way they deferred to her on questions of etiquette (as, for instance, Should the eldest child be given the family name of the wife or a Christian name from her husband's family?). And P'tite Louison's opinion was accepted instantly as final, with satisfied nods on the part of all the brothers, and with whispers of "How clever! how adorable! such beauty!"

P'tite Louison affected never to hear these remarks, but looked complacently straight before her, stirring the spoon in her cup, or benignly passing the bread and butter. She was quite aware of the homage paid to her, and she gracefully accepted the fact that she was an object of interest.

Medallion had not the heart to laugh at the adoration of the brothers or at the outlandish sister, for, though she was angular, and sallow and thin, and her hands were large and red, there was a something deep

in her eyes, a curious quality in her carriage commanding respect. She had ruled these brothers, had been worshipped by them, for near half a century, and the romance they had kept alive had produced a grotesque sort of truth and beauty in the admiring "P'tite Louison"—an affectionate name for her greatness, like "The Little Corporal" for Napoleon. She was not little, either, but above the middle height, and her hair was well streaked with grey.

Her manner toward Medallion was not marked by any affectation. She was friendly in a kind, impersonal way, much as a nurse cares for a patient, and she never relaxed a sort of old-fashioned courtesy, which might have been trying in such close quarters, were it not for the real simplicity of the life, and the spirit and lightness of the race. One night Florian—there were Florian and Octave and Felix and Isidore and Emile—the eldest, drew Medallion aside from the others, and they walked together by the river. Florian's air suggested confidence and mystery, and soon, with a voice of hushed suggestion, he told Medallion the romance of P'tite Louison. And each of the brothers at different times during the next fortnight did the same, differing scarcely at all in details, or choice of phrase or meaning, and not at all in general facts and essentials. But each, as he ended, made a different exclamation.

"*Voilà !* so sad, so wonderful ! She keeps the ring—dear P'tite Louison," said Florian, the eldest.

"*Alors !* she gives him a legacy in her will ! Sweet P'tite Louison," said Octave.

"*Mais !* the governor and the archbishop admire her—P'tite Louison," said Felix, nodding confidently at Medallion.

"*Bien !* you should see the linen and the petticoats !" said Isidore, the humorous one of the family. "He was great—she was an angel—P'tite Louison !"

"*Attends !* what love ! what history ! what passion !—the perfect P'tite Louison !" cried Emile, the youngest, the most sentimental. "Ah, Molière !" he added, as if calling on the master to rise and sing the glories of this daughter of romance.

Isidore's tale was after this fashion :

"I ver' well remember the first of it ; and the last of it—who can tell ? He was an actor—oh, so droll, that ! Tall, ver' smart, and he play in theatre at Montreal. It is in the winter. P'tite Louison visit Montreal. She walk past the theatre and, as she go by, she slip

on the snow and fall. Out from a door with a jomp come M'sieu' Hadrian, and pick her up. And when he see the purty face of P'tite Louison, his eyes go all fire, and he clasp her hand to his breast.

" ' Ma'm'selle ! Ma'm'selle ! ' he say, ' we must meet again ! ' "

" She thank him and hurry away quick. Next day we are on the river, and P'tite Louison try to do the Dance of the Blue Fox on the ice. While she do it, some one come up swift and catch her hand and say, ' Ma'm'selle, let's do it together '—like that ! It take her breath away. It is M'sieu' Hadrian. He not seem like the other men she know, but he have a sharp look, he is smooth in the face, and he smile kind like a woman. P'tite Louison, she give him her hand, and they run away, and every one stop to look. It is a gran' sight ! M'sieu' Hadrian laugh, and his teeth shine, and the ladies say things of him, and he tell P'tite Louison that she look ver' fine, and walk like a queen. I am there that day, and I see all, and I think it dam good. I say, ' That P'tite Louison, she beat them all '—I am only twelve year old then. When M'sieu' Hadrian leave he give her two seats for the theatre, and we go. Bagosh ! that is grand thing that play, and M'sieu' Hadrian, he is a prince ; and when he say to his minister, ' But no, my lord, I will marry out of my star, and where my heart go, not as the State wills,' he look down at P'tite Louison, and she go all red, and some of the women look at her, and there is a whisper all roun'.

" Nex' day he come to the house where we stay, but the Curé come also pretty soon and tell her she must go home—he say an actor is not good company. Never mind. And so we come out home. Well, what you think ? Nex' day M'sieu' Hadrian come too, and we have dam good time—Florian, Octave. Felix, Emile, they all sit and say bully-good to him all the time. Holy, what fine stories he tell ! And he talk about P'tite Louison, and his eyes get wet, and Emile he say his prayers to him—bagosh ! yes, I think. Well, at last, what you guess ? M'sieu' he come and come, and at last one day, he say that he leave Montreal and go to New York, where he get a good place in a big theatre—his time in Montreal is finish. So he speak to Florian and say he want to marry P'tite Louison, and he say, of course, that he is not marry and he have money. But he is a Protestan', and the Curé at first ver' mad, bagosh !

" But at last when he give a hunder' dollars to the Church, the Curé say yes. All happy that way for while. P'tite Louison, she get

ready quick—*sapré*, what fine things had she ! and it is all to be done in a week, while the theatre in New York wait for M'sieu'. He sit there with us, and play on the fiddle, and sing-songs, and act plays, and help Florian in the barn, and Octave to mend the fence, and the Curé to fix the grape-vines on his wall. He show me and Emile how to play sword-sticks ; and he pick flowers and fetch them to P'tite Louison, and teach her how to make an omelette and a salad like the *chef* of the Louis Quinze Hotel, so he say. Bagosh, what a good time we have ! But first one, then another, he get a choke-throat when he think that P'tite Louison go to leave us, and the more we try the more we are bagosh fools. And that P'tite Louison, she kiss us hevery one, and say to M'sieu' Hadrian, ' Charles, I love you, but I cannot go ! ' He laugh at her, and say, ' *Voilà !* we will take them all with us,' and P'tite Louison she laugh. That night a thing happen. The Curé come, and he look ver' mad, and he frown and he say to M'sieu' Hadrian before us all, ' M'sieu', you are married ! '

" *Sapré !* that P'tite Louison get pale like snow, and we all stan' roun' her close and say to her quick, ' Courage, P'tite Louison ! ' M'sieu' Hadrian then look at the priest and say, ' No, M'sieu', I was married ten years ago ; my wife drink and go wrong, and I get divorce. I am free like the wind.'

" ' You are not free,' the Curé say quick. ' Once married, married till death. The Church cannot marry you again, and I command Louison to give you up.'

" P'tite Louison stand like stone. M'sieu' turn to her. ' What shall it be, Louison ? ' he say. ' You will come with me ? '

" ' Kiss me, Charles,' she say, ' and tell me good-bye till—till you are free.'

" He look like a madman. ' Kiss me once, Charles,' she say, ' and let me go.'

" And he come to her and kiss her on the lips once, and he say, ' Louison, come with me. I will never give you up.'

" She draw back to Florian. ' Good-bye, Charles ! ' she say. ' I will wait as long as you will. Mother of God ! how hard it is to do right ! ' she say, and then she turn and leave the room.

" M'sieu' Hadrian, he give a long sigh. ' It was my one chance,' he say. ' Now the devil take it all ! ' Then he nod and say to the Curé, ' We'll thrash this out at Judgment Day, M'sieu'. I'll meet you there—you and that other woman that spoiled me.'

" He turn to Florian and the rest of us, and shake hands, and say, ' Take care of Louison. Thank you. Good-bye ! ' Then he start toward the door, but stumble, for he look sick. ' Give me a drink,' he say, and begin to cough a little—a queer sort of rattle. Florian give him big drink, and he toss it off—whiff ! ' Thank you,' he say, and start again, and we see him walk away over the hill ver' slow—an' he never come back ! But every year there come from New York a box of flowers, and every year P'tite Louison send him a '*Merci, Charles, mille fois. Dieu te garde.*' It is so every year for twenty-five year."

" Where is he now ? " asked Medallion.

Isidore shook his head, then lifted his eyes religiously. " Waiting for Judgment Day and P'tite Louison," he answered.

" Dead ! " cried Medallion. " How long ? "

" Twenty year."

" But the flowers—the flowers ? "

" He left word for them to be sent just the same, and the money for it."

Medallion turned and took off his hat reverently, as if a soul were passing from the world, but it was only P'tite Louison going out into the garden.

" She thinks him living ? " he asked gently, as he watched Louison.

" Yes ; we have no heart to tell her. And then he wish it so. And the flowers kep' coming."

" Why did he wish it so ? "

Isidore mused a while.

" Who can tell ? Perhaps a whim. He was a great actor—ah, yes, sublime ! " he said.

Medallion did not reply, but walked slowly down to where P'tite Louison was picking berries. His hat was still off.

" Let me help you, Mademoiselle," he said softly. And henceforth he was as foolish as her brothers.

THE SINGING OF THE BEES

SIR GILBERT PARKER

“ **M**OTHER, didst thou not say thy prayers last night ? ”

“ Twice, my child.”

“ Once before the little shrine, and once beside my bed—is it not so ? ”

“ It is so, my Fanchon. What hast thou in thy mind ? ”

“ Thou didst pray that the storm die in the hills, and the flood cease, and that my father come before it was again the hour of prayer. It is now the hour. Canst thou not hear the storm and the wash of the flood ? And my father does not come ! ”

“ My Fanchon, God is good.”

“ When thou wast asleep I rose from my bed, and in the dark I kissed the feet of—Him—on the little Calvary, and I did not speak, but in my heart I called.”

“ What didst thou call, my child ? ”

“ I called to my father : ‘ Come back ! come back ! ’ ”

“ Thou shouldst have called to God, my Fanchon.”

“ I loved my father, and I called to him.”

“ Thou shouldst love God.”

“ I knew my father first. If God loved thee, He would answer thy prayer. Dost thou not hear the cracking of the cedar trees and the cry of the wolves ?—they are afraid. All day and all night the rain and wind come down, and the birds and wild fowl have no peace. I kissed His feet, and my throat was full of tears, but I called in my heart. Yet the storm and the dark stay, and my father does not come.”

“ Let us be patient, my Fanchon.”

“ He went to guide the priest across the hills. Why does not God guide him back ? ”

“ My Fanchon, let us be patient.”

“ The priest was young, and my father has grey hair.”

“ Wilt thou not be patient, my child ! ”

“ He filled the knapsack of the priest with food better than his own, and—thou didst not see it—put money in his hand.”

“ My own, the storm may pass.”

"He told the priest to think upon our home as a little nest God set up here for such as he."

"There are places of shelter in the hills for thy father, my Fanchon."

"And when the priest prayed, 'That Thou mayst bring us safely to this place where we would go,' my father said so softly, '*We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord!*'"

"My Fanchon, thy father hath gone this trail many times."

"The prayer was for the out-trail, not the in-trail, my mother."

"Nay, I do not understand thee."

"A swarm of bees came singing through the room last night, my mother. It was dark and I could not see, but there was a sweet smell, and I heard the voices."

"My child, thou art tired with watching, and thy mind is full of fancies. Thou must sleep."

"I am tired of watching. Through the singing of the bees as they passed over my bed I heard my father's voice. I could not hear the words, they seemed so far away, like the voices of the bees; and I did not cry out, for the tears were in my throat. After a moment the room was so still that it made my heart ache."

"Oh, my Fanchon, my child, thou dost break my heart! Dost thou not know the holy words?—

"And their souls do pass like singing bees, where no man may follow. These are they whom God gathereth out of the whirlwind and the desert, and bringeth home in a goodly swarm."

Night drew close to the earth, and as suddenly as a sluice-gate drops and holds back a flood the storm ceased. Along the crest of the hills there slowly grew a line of light, and then the serene moon came up and on, persistent to give the earth love where it had had punishment. Divers flocks of clouds, camp-followers of the storm, could not abash her. But once she drew shrinking back behind a slow troop of them, for down at the bottom of a gorge lay a mountaineer, face upward and unmoving, as he had lain since a rock loosened beneath him, and the depths swallowed him. If he had had ears to hear, he would have answered the soft, bitter cries which rose from a hut on the Voshti Hills above him: "Michel, Michel, art thou gone?"

"Come back; oh, my father, come back!"

But perhaps it did avail that there were lighted candles before a little shrine, and that a mother, in her darkness, kissed the feet of One on a Calvary.

OLIVE SCHREINER

B. 1862

IN A FAR-OFF WORLD

THERE is a world in one of the far-off stars, and things do not happen here as they happen there.

In that world were a man and woman ; they had one work, and they walked together side by side on many days, and were friends—and that is a thing that happens now and then in this world also.

But there was something in that star-world that there is not here. There was a thick wood ; where the trees grew closest, and the stems were interlocked, and the summer sun never shone, there stood a shrine. In the day all was quiet, but at night, when the stars shone or the moon glinted on the tree-tops, and all was quiet below, if one crept here quite alone and knelt on the steps of the stone altar, and uncovering one's breast, so wounded it that the blood fell down on the altar steps, then whatever he who knelt there wished for was granted him. And all this happens, as I said, because it is a far-off world, and things often happen there as they do not happen here.

Now, the man and woman walked together ; and the woman wished well to the man. One night when the moon was shining so that the leaves of all the trees glinted, and the waves of the sea were silvery, the woman walked alone to the forest. It was dark there ; the moonlight fell only in little flecks on the dead leaves under her feet, and the branches were knotted tight overhead. Farther in it got darker ; not even a fleck of moonlight shone. Then she came to the shrine : she knelt down before it and prayed ; there came no answer. Then she uncovered her breast ; with a sharp two-edged stone that lay there she wounded it. The drops dripped slowly down on to the stone, and a voice cried, " What do you seek ? "

She answered, " There is a man ; I hold him nearer than anything. I would give him the best of all blessings."

The voice said, " What is it ? "

The girl said, " I know not, but that which is most good for him I wish him to have."

The voice said, " Your prayer is answered ; he shall have it."

Then she stood up. She covered her breast and held the garment tight upon it with her hand, and ran out of the forest, and the dead leaves fluttered under her feet. Out in the moonlight the soft air was blowing, and the sand glittered on the beach. She ran along the smooth shore, then suddenly she stood still. Out across the water there was something moving. She shaded her eyes and looked. It was a boat ; it was sliding swiftly over the moonlit water out to sea. One stood upright in it ; the face the moonlight did not show, but the figure she knew. It was passing swiftly ; it seemed as if no one propelled it ; the moonlight's shimmer did not let her see clearly, and the boat was far from shore, but it seemed almost as if there was another figure sitting in the stern. Faster and faster it glided over the water, away, away. She ran along the shore ; she came no nearer it. The garment she held closed fluttered open ; she stretched out her arms, and the moonlight shone on her long loose hair.

Then a voice beside her whispered, " What is it ? "

She cried, " With my blood I bought the best of all gifts for him. I have come to bring it him ! He is going from me ! "

The voice whispered softly, " Your prayer was answered. It has been given him."

She cried, " What is it ? "

The voice answered, " It is that he might leave you."

The girl stood still.

Far out at sea the boat was lost to sight beyond the moonlight sheen.

The voice spoke softly, " Art thou contented ? "

She said, " I am contented."

At her feet the waves broke in long ripples softly on the shore.

THE ARTIST'S SECRET

OLIVE SCHREINER

THERE was an artist once, and he painted a picture. Other artists had colours richer and rarer, and painted more notable pictures. He painted his with one colour; there was a wonderful red glow on it; and the people went up and down, saying, "We like the picture; we like the glow."

The other artists came and said, "Where does he get his colour from?" They asked him, and he smiled and said, "I cannot tell you"; and worked on with his head bent low.

And one went to the Far East and bought costly pigments, and made a rare colour and painted, but after a time the picture faded. Another read in the old books, and made a colour rich and rare, but when he had put it on the picture it was dead.

But the artist painted on. Always the work got redder and redder, and the artist grew whiter and whiter. At last one day they found him dead before his picture, and they took him up to bury him. The other men looked about in all the pots and crucibles, but they found nothing they had not.

And when they undressed him to put his grave-clothes on him, they found above his left breast the mark of a wound—it was an old, old wound, that must have been there all his life, for the edges were old and hardened; but Death, who seals all things, had drawn the edges together, and closed it up.

And they buried him. And still the people went about saying, "Where did he find his colour from?"

And it came to pass that after a while the artist was forgotten—but the work lived.

H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON

B. 1868

QUARANTINE

THE Doctor took the pipe from his mouth and glanced about the room.

You have been talking a lot about right and wrong (said he), and I've listened carefully. But it doesn't seem to me that it is always as easy as some of you think. There is a case in my memory illustrative. It swims to the surface of the undredged pool after nearly thirty years. You know me now as a staid and contented old fogey with a quiet practice. In those days I was a rover, and at the time I speak of I was surgeon on the corvette *Seagull*. The very name is antediluvian. Where are they now, the sloops, corvettes, frigates? . . . The *Seagull* was on the Australian station, and we popped in and out of Australasian harbours, were merrily and hospitably entertained, and enjoyed ourselves to the full. It was as good a station as any in the seven seas in my time. There was junketing, there were picnics, there were parties . . . and there were pleasant cruises in the South Seas, policing the islands, and meeting new races and seeing strange sights all the time. Well, at the time I'm talking of we were in the neighbourhood of the Solomon Islands, and it was late spring. I believe we were steaming south patrolling the Melanesian belt. Anyway, it was a beautiful still night with a moon full on the quiet sea, and I was below looking after some personal matter. Suddenly a steward knocked and entered abruptly, with an urgent message from the Captain, and I was conscious at the same time that the *Seagull* had slowed down. Up I skipped in excitement, for nothing had broken the monotony of the voyage for days, and I guessed that something was forward. On deck I found the Captain and other officers leaning over the side and looking down into a boat which the sailors were handling.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Castaway," said the second officer.

We watched the sailors bring something aboard in the moonlight, and there my work came in. It was a bad case, and the poor devil

had suffered cruelly. When I got him down below I made an examination. He was a man of about thirty, I should guess, and with a queer suggestion of clerical attire by means of a white bow in what was otherwise the usual island rig for white men. He was unconscious when we picked him up, and his face and body were much emaciated. I saw what it all meant—privation, exhaustion, shock. From beginning to end it looked a bad case, and it proved so. I did what I could for him, and he revived, and flickered up a bit ; but the drain on his vitality had been too great, and he sank and died on the fourth day. But he was able and anxious to talk at intervals during the few days that he lingered, and was particularly urgent that we should put the corvette about for an island called Manira. I got the whole story in pieces, and I put it together in my mind when he was dead and buried ; and the thing emerges just now from my memories as vivid as if it were yesterday. . . .

His name was McCulloch, the Rev. Gavin McCulloch, and he belonged to a Methodist persuasion in Vermont or somewhere there. He had been educated at a Methodist college, and filled with Christian fervour, ideas of humanity, brotherhood, and sacrifice. You know how ardently that flame may burn in youth. It often takes a missionary direction, and that's what it took with him. He yearned to devote himself and his life to the services of barbarous savages somewhere, China or Timbuctoo—anywhere. And fate, providence, chance, what you will, sent him out to a lonely island in the Pacific black belt.

Manira is an isolated isle, outlying a scattered group, and inhabited by a Melanesian people. Altogether it seems Manira had a population of three or four hundred, and of these all were of the usual colour save a handful of white settlers on the west side. The island was of coral origin, and was no more than six or seven miles from end to end. McCulloch settled on the east end, where the bulk of the natives were, and began his work. He worked with a zeal worthy of the apostolic times, and the easy-going, simple natives respected him, got to trust him, and went to him for advice and assistance in trouble. They were adaptable in faith, and he roped in converts wholesale. On the west end was the white station, where a small partnership of four men from Sydney grew palm oil, collected *bêche-de-mer* and copra, and prospected around generally. They had arrived a few years before McCulloch, and had engaged some fifty natives in their commercial operations. McCulloch confessed that they treated their employés

very fairly, though the system amounted to a kind of *corvée*, for they pressed the Kanakas into their service willy-nilly. Yet they fed them well, and used them with some kindness. McCulloch got on pretty well with the whites, though, of course, they were not much of the same way of thinking in many matters, particularly religion. He walked over, or was pulled round in a boat, occasionally, and looked after the spiritual welfare of the plantation natives. He regarded himself as pastor of a parish which was the whole island. I fancy he tried to convert the whites, but he probably got discouraged; anyway, the Kanakas were his flock, and he preached and tended, and gave advice, and no one objected, so long as he didn't interfere with the work of the station. I gathered that in a sort of contemptuous way they had a liking for the sky-pilot, though they chaffed him a good deal. He didn't drink or smoke or play cards, and that was about all they had to do for recreation; but he talked and he listened, and he prayed in his heart, I have no doubt. He was a man of prayer. Naturally they hadn't much in common, but they were all whites together. McCulloch looked after the body as well as the spirit, and he had a medicine case, about which he knew something. Wilson gave him brandy when he wanted it for a case of dysentery, and loaned him drugs which he lacked. Oh yes, they got on well enough together.

Manira lies pretty much in the desert of waters, so to speak, and ships mainly drift there by chance. Wilson and Co. had made arrangements in Sydney by which a boat called once in six months with stores and news, and took off their produce. This steamer had made three trips during McCulloch's residence, and was due for a fourth visit when another visitor blew in. This was a schooner that put into the little cove where the missionary's village lay, and sent a boat ashore. It was a tramp, worn and battered with years, and was homing at last. A mate came ashore on the boat, and explained his dilemma to McCulloch. They'd got a sick man aboard, and had no means of looking after him, neither medicines nor knowledge. He asked McCulloch to receive the man and do his best for him; and McCulloch, who thought he was placed in the world to follow his Master and do good, willingly consented. The man, a Kanaka, one of the crew, was landed, and the schooner set sail. Now McCulloch was puzzled about this sickness. The mate said that no one knew what was the matter with the Kanaka, and urged that the poor devil

ought to have a chance. This went right home to McCulloch, but he hung about the man, wondering what was wrong. He suspected one thing and then another, and hunted through his medical book. He had had no training in medicine, but had a smattering of picked-up knowledge. And he hunted through the pages. By and by some spots appeared, and he turned up measles ; but it did not seem to be measles. He fed the man and tended him, and observed him and studied his books for some days, and then he got an idea, and it worried him.

It was two days after that Wilson went over to the missionary village. The steamer had paid its expected visit, landed stores, loaded up, and departed, and Wilson, pretty well pleased with the results, walked over in the cool of the evening with some papers and books for McCulloch. The steamer brought these literary supplies to keep up connection with the outside world, and furnish occupation for the leisure of the settlement. Wilson strode into McCulloch's shanty, a big gaunt cornstalk of six feet three, and chucked the papers on the table.

"We might have been at war with Russia for all we knew," he said, with a laugh. "There's been a row over a place called Penjdeh or something. But that don't interest you under the Stars and Stripes."

McCulloch was looking worried, but he politely said that he hoped he was interested in the welfare of all men. Wilson noted his looks and commented on them.

McCulloch, if I'm any judge of men, was the honestest soul alive. He was simple to boot, and he had a touching confidence in the real goodness of human nature.

"Yes," said he, "I'm troubled. I had a case of illness entrusted to me from a schooner a week ago. The man's bad."

"Humph!" says Wilson. "Kanaka, I suppose? They've no real stamina."

"It's not that," said McCulloch. "It's the disease I'm afraid of. It puzzled me for a long time. But I'm pretty sure now, and it makes me very anxious. I'm afraid the man will die."

"What's he got?" asked Wilson indifferently.

"I very much fear it's smallpox," said McCulloch. Now you here, I and all of us in old countries with the evils and travails of worn centuries upon them (said the doctor), don't take much account

of smallpox. We may even live cheek by jowl with smallpox isolation hospitals. Anyway, it's endemic among us. But that is not how they regard the malady south of the line, and particularly in Australia and New Zealand. I remember being in Port Lyttelton once when there was a scare of smallpox raised, not, mind you, in New Zealand, but in Sydney, five days' steam away. A case had occurred on an emigrant ship, and was promptly quarantined, but from the scare-heads of the papers, and the cablegrams flashed in all directions and thousands of miles, you would have thought the end of the world had come. Well, when Wilson heard the word he answered to it as any other colonial would have done. He rose from his seat.

"H——!" he said, and stared at the missionary with his hard grey eyes. "Where is he?" he demanded, and when he learned that the sick-room was in the next shanty he backed to the door.

"Look here, McCulloch," he said. "This won't do. I'm vaccinated, but I don't take unnecessary risks. I guess you're in quarantine, and don't you forget it. Man, you were a damn fool to take that sick man, but you're going to die a damn fool. Anyway, keep clear of us. I'm sorry for you, but we've got ourselves and our men to look after. This is Quarantine Island, and don't you forget it."

Wilson was a bluff, deliberate fellow of few fears and scruples, as I could see when I came upon him later. But the others in his company were different. O'Reilly had the temper of a savage, and Wilks was a nervous, irritable man. There was also a boy of twenty, fresh from his mother, with a lion's heart, and a fresh zest for life. He was full of cheer and sang comic songs. His companions were fond of him. Wilson's report brought the alarm to them, and they had a bad scare, and watched out for some days. At the end of that time no news had come from McCulloch, and the party began to fidget, so it ended in Wilson's rowing round with the boy, and hailing the parson from the cove. After some minutes McCulloch came down to the beach in his ducks, and told them that the Kanaka was dead. He had died the day after Wilson had paid his visit. I have said McCulloch was an incredibly honest man, and so he went on to say, "I regret there's another case developed."

Wilson's face tightened, and an ugly look seized it. "You know what quarantine is, McCulloch," he said. "You've got to keep it, by——"

McCulloch said he would do all that was possible to maintain

isolation. "I'm short of some medicines," he said, and Wilson struck in :

"I'll send over what you want. We'll land 'em here, if you tell me what." And when that was over the boat paddled out, and Wilson shouted back, "I'm sorry, McCulloch, but you've got to keep the laws," and the boy, who was fresh and full-hearted, waved his hand. "So long, old man!" he called.

The boy carried the medicines and some stores round in the boat next day, and left them on the beach, having signalled to McCulloch. "What's the news?" he cried from the boat, and McCulloch, looking grave and quiet, answered, "There are two more cases."

"Hard luck!" said the youngster. But he did not know what more to say or do, and after a silence shouted good-bye and rowed off. McCulloch had his hands full during the next few days.

There was a native called Tommy who had picked up civilised white ways pretty quickly, and whom McCulloch employed more familiarly about him than others. Tommy rang the bell for church service, and Tommy officiated as body-servant, and interpreted between the pastor and his flock generally. McCulloch had the lingo himself pretty well. Well, Tommy, who was young and smart, had a sweetheart at the other end of the island, and, quarantine regulations being nothing to him, he paid her a visit one night when he was quit of his duties. He was seen in the vicinity of the settlement, and Wilson came over the following day, and hailed McCulloch.

"Understand, McCulloch," he said, "we can't have any monkeying about this business. I don't mind a risk, but this is a dead certainty. You've got to keep your people in quarantine bounds."

There was a stream wandering out of some hills about half-way across the island, and the hills and the stream divided the island; so Wilson made these the boundaries, and he let McCulloch know that they must be kept.

"If that Tommy of yours or any other comes over the line," he said, "we'll deal with him."

McCulloch promised he would observe the boundaries, and the deputation returned. But the poor wretch was all alone in a nest of ignorant savages. He wanted a guard of sentinels to help him, and Tommy was a childlike native with the instinct to obey when his master's eye was on him, and the child's instinct to follow his own bent when the eye wasn't there. So Tommy, though warned and

put on his honour, went over again to see his young lady. Wilson and Co. were now more on the alert, realising the danger, and Tommy was chased and all but caught in the thickets. Then came the ultimatum. Wilson and O'Reilly went to the cove, and gave warning.

"If you can't control your natives, we'll not be responsible," they told him. "And we give you fair and square notice that we won't have the plague brought over on us. So if we catch Tommy he'll be shot."

McCulloch begged them earnestly to reconsider this threat of warfare. He appealed to them as Christians, but got no response. They went back sullenly resolute to protect themselves, and McCulloch went to his house and prayed for hours on end. Things were beginning to look ugly. He talked to Tommy very gravely, and Tommy gave glib promises, and kept to them for ten days or so. There were some more cases of the disease, and McCulloch worked night and day. Meanwhile Tommy got restive, heard the call of romance, and gave him the slip. McCulloch had gone to rest for an hour, exhausted by his labours, and Tommy had been instructed to wake him. He was not called, and slept heavily, till at last he woke with a start, and looking at his watch found it was midnight. Tommy was nowhere to be found, and one of the natives who helped to nurse the sick men pointed to the hills and the darkness. McCulloch had misgivings, and he went off in the direction of the quarantine boundaries. There was a track which the natives had been accustomed to use in going to and fro, and this crossed the stream and went up the hills into the jungle, and so down to the plantations of Wilson and Co., on the farther side. McCulloch spoke with the natives in a little hamlet on his own frontier and had news of Tommy. There was no doubt that Tommy had broken parole and bounds too. McCulloch waited anxiously.

It came just before dawn. In that region there is practically no night, but a benevolent moving twilight, and the trees and scrub of the jungle were visible all through his watch. First there came a noise, faint but persistent, and it grew in intensity, till he began to recognise it as the sound of some one breaking through the jungle at a tearing pace. McCulloch in alarm ran across the dividing stream, and towards the hill. He could see no one, but he knew that some one was flying from a pursuer. And then a figure ran out of the scrub into the open flat, and came fast towards him. McCulloch

heard sounds in the jungle higher up the hill. As he stood, wondering, fearing, and indecisive, a report rang out, and the man running towards him plunged heavily to the earth. McCulloch dashed forward, and reached the prostrate man. It was Tommy, shot dead through the back. McCulloch straightened himself and looked towards the hill, where a black figure stood clearly visible.

"Damn you, I'll shoot you too, if you don't keep bounds, Parson," shouted a voice he recognised. It was O'Reilly's, passionate and flamboyantly Irish. McCulloch shouted back:

"It's murder! It's murder. God will avenge. It's cold-blooded murder!"

O'Reilly turned his back on him and walked off, and McCulloch stumbled across the stream with his burden. After that there was no Tommy to cause any trouble, and things were quiet for a week. That is to say, McCulloch heard nothing and saw nothing of the plantation people. But work crowded on his hands; there were more cases of smallpox, and his medicine chest and stores began to give out. He found himself obliged to apply to Wilson against his will, and with two natives rowed round the island to the landing-stage. He was warned off by Wilks, who was the first to espy them, and presently three of the company were gathered together in consultation—Wilson, Wilks, and the boy.

McCulloch shouted out what he wanted, and they consulted again. The boy ran up the beach to the huts, and Wilson and Wilks kept guard.

"I can give you brandy and some other things," shouted Wilson. "But you'd a damn sight better shoot your cases, McCulloch."

McCulloch naturally didn't answer that, and he was told he could come ashore and pick up the medicines at a distance. He was glad to get them, and returned grateful thanks.

"I know your heart's in the right place, Mr. Wilson," he said. "But you have an evil associate."

Wilson grinned very grimly. O'Reilly wasn't there.

McCulloch had trained some of his flock into nursing ways, but they must have made an odd show. They were docile folk, I gathered, but stupid, vacant, and very animal. So far they had not taken alarm at the epidemic; I suppose they were more or less used to unexpected death, if I may put it that way. Within the quarantine bounds there were about two hundred Kanakas all told, men, women, and children,

and on the farther side of the dividing stream and hills somewhere about the same. Wilson and Co. employed fifty or sixty hands, and they treated them decently, as I have said. They had even gone the length of putting up a model village. That is to say, they had drafted the families out of their dirty hovels into a convenient place, established them on a sort of system, and supervised them. It paid them to do so, for they got better work out of the men, and they had them always under authority. Wilson was no fool.

A little after the missionary's visit for supplies Wilson paid him a return visit, Wilson and the boy ; and they had a passenger.

Wilson landed, and they landed the passenger on the beach, and Wilson's face was terrific. It awed even poor overworked, exhausted, and obdurate McCulloch. This was the first case of smallpox in the plantation and they had brought it round. It pointed the finger of doom, and Wilson pointed the clenched fist of menace. His language must have been appalling. The parson did not repeat it to me.

"This is war, McCulloch," said that six foot and a half of cornstalk. "This is deadly like open declaration. You have been warned before ; but there's more behind and worse. Better die by bullet than this way," and he made a gesture at the dying native. He left the body there, and rowed away cursing, and the boy said nothing, but stared at the shore as he pulled. McCulloch saw him staring.

It was inevitable that the natives should take fright in the end. The death-roll was so long and grew so fast. They must have died like flies. . . . And then the second act of the tragedy opened. The Kanakas left their homes and fled to the hills to escape the contagion. They looked upon it as the invasion of a personal and malignant devil. They took to the hills and hid in the jungle, and so some of them reached the plantation village. Wilson and his men drove them in under guns to the quarantine bounds, and there among a few huts across the stream they saw McCulloch on his knees with the sun on his hair, praying for mercy, praying for help. The plague had broken out there, and children had died of it. He prayed in the centre of the stricken place and saw and heard no one. Somehow the sight, and what it all meant in pathos, went to Wilson's heart, and what he was going to do he didn't do, as he told me afterwards.

McCulloch rose and saw the enemy, and Wilson explained suddenly what had happened. McCulloch was haggard and thin, and showed

all the marks of the strain to which he had been subjected, and he stuttered out brokenly his apologies and said that he would do all he could to confine his natives to the Quarantine. Then, I take it, Wilson was moved to a certain rude sympathy.

"Look here, McCulloch," he said with bluff friendliness, "you know you're fighting a lost battle. You can't stop it; you can only prevent the ravages from spreading further, as we're trying to do. I'll tell you what. Here's an offer. Give it up and come out of that, where you're only killing yourself. Give yourself a chance. Come out, and we'll establish you in an isolation hut near the plantation, and after the usual time you can get *pratique*, or whatever they call it, and join us, if you're free from the disease. As for these wretches, well, *Kismet!* You've done all you can."

It was well meant, as I say, but it had about as much chance with McCulloch as a proposal from his satanic majesty. I gathered that he quoted scripture and garnished his refusal in that way; at which the cornstalk lost patience.

"Oh, go to hell your own way," he said as he strode off, and shouted back, "Remember, we're fighting for lives as much as you, and we'll shoot."

The immediate result of the encounter was that Wilson took precautions, as it were, against a declared enemy. He armed sentinels whom he could trust, and stationed them along the boundaries. He drew a cordon, in fact, across the hostile territory. There could be only one issue to that in the conditions prevailing. The Kanakas got more panicky, and McCulloch was helpless, though he prayed and preached day after day. Death was among them in their huts, and they broke the cordon and climbed the hills, and then they found death in the jungles—an easier death, maybe.

The armed natives, pleased with their toys, the rifles, and also with their prowess, shot whenever a chance offered, and there were a dozen dead men on the hills within the week. McCulloch, saddened and embittered, and worn to the bone, worked on. I don't know if you will call it fanaticism; at any rate, it was nobility; it was sheer self-sacrifice. It was suicide. I am getting near the climax now, and it's ugly—it's ugly even as I look back at it over a quarter of a century. It is a fatal mistake to extend to an inferior civilisation the instruments and equipments of a superior. I know that's putting it grandiosely. I'll put it tersely and bluntly. "Don't trust niggers

with guns." Wilson did. The Kanakas in the missionary settlement got more scared, and made attempts to bolt. One family from the huts near the stream made a rush for it, and were shot down. There were two children. . . . Then McCulloch saw red. He was not a man of war, but then he came so near to it as to be a prophet of wrath, like a Hebrew of old, ingeminating hell. He visited the plantation, and was thrust back into the sea at the end of bayonets.

"God will smite you!" he cried. "God takes His vengeance. Vengeance is His, not man's. God shall smite you, you whited wall!"

O'Reilly laughed, Wilson swore, and the boy stared shamefacedly. Was there a curse on the settlement?

Anyway, two cases broke out next day in the plantation village, and Wilks was in desperate terror. He was a coward, was Wilks, I fancy. Wilson got panicky too; the dread thing was coming very close. They talked it over, and isolated the cases; but they had as little guarantee that the quarantine would be kept as had poor McCulloch. So in the end they rowed the patients round to McCulloch, and dumped them on him. Wilson must have felt he was doing a mean thing. McCulloch stared at him with hot, red eyes, a gaunt figure, and said no word. Wilson promised supplies, offered medicines and other necessities.

"We reckon this is hospital," he said grimly, and then O'Reilly touched him on the arm, and they spoke together in low tones so that the boy heard nothing.

"See here," said Wilson, raising his voice, "we'll leave supplies to-morrow evening at the Palm Cove yonder, and you can come for them. They'll be there by dusk."

McCulloch still answered nothing, but stooped over the stricken natives on the beach wearifully. The fact is that there and then Wilson and O'Reilly made up their minds to whole measures. They were badly frightened, and they couldn't see any way out. There was more talk at night in their quarters, and next day McCulloch was astonished to see the boy walking out of a palm tree grove towards his house. He had come across the island, and his visit was unknown to his companions. I never learnt that boy's name, or I should like to have put it on record. He was young and new to desperate deeds, and he had heard things that shocked him. But McCulloch, who thought that maybe he had brought some of the supplies with him, warned him off.

"You'd better stay where you are," he called out, "and come no nearer. We're rank bad here. Put what you've got down, and I'll fetch it."

"I haven't got anything," said the boy nervously. "I've just come to see you."

"Well, you must do no more than that," said McCulloch, and added bitterly, "You can go back and say you've seen one man trying to do his duty."

"And by ——!" broke out the boy, "you've done it."

McCulloch softened. "Sit down on that rock," said he, "and we can talk."

"What's that building there?" asked the boy. "Is that your chapel?"

"It is the chapel, and it's the hospital," said McCulloch. "The dead and the dying are there."

"It's a blooming mortuary!" said the boy, shuddering.

McCulloch pointed to the huts. This one had two dead in it; another was full of sick; three children and a mother lay dying in a third. . . . The boy swore.

"Cut it, McCulloch," he said. "Come over to us, as Wilson suggested. You've done more than enough."

"I have put my hand to the plough, and I dare not look back," said McCulloch simply.

The boy swore again, swore no doubt to cover his feelings. He stood up.

"There's something, anyway, I want to tell you, and it's what I came for," he said. "It seems a bit absurd after what I've advised. Anyway, here goes. No one knows I'm here. To-night don't go for that medicine and the stores. Take it from me, and stay away. So long!" he shouted, and stepped away briskly without looking back. Perhaps he was ashamed of his feelings.

McCulloch had practically run out of all necessities, and if he was to carry on at all he must have fresh supplies. God alone knows how he did manage through those terrible days, tending the sick, ministering, praying, encouraging, exhorting, and burying. It makes one wince to think of it. McCulloch could not afford to be without the stores; if he lacked these he must give up. He told me that he paid little heed to the boy's cryptic warning, but it was in his mind vaguely as he made his way to the cove that he might be shot down

like the poor creatures who had crossed the cordon. His brain was dulled and his imagination a blur. He did not care what became of him, but realised merely that he had got to struggle on for his sick, as long as his life lasted. He got down to the cove through the scrub at dusk, and could see no one. He was a conspicuous figure for a marksman as he descended to the beach, but no one fired at him. Wilson had been as good as his word, and there were the stores and the medicine in a small cache. McCulloch rolled the stones away, and was pocketing the drugs, when suddenly he was seized from behind, and ere he could turn, his elbows were drawn back.

"Damn you, don't make it worse for yourself!" said a voice he recognised as O'Reilly's.

He struggled for all that, but a cord was inserted under his arms, and they were tied back. He was as helpless as a trussed fowl.

Now he recognised Wilson, who came up from the covert of some bushes. McCulloch protested, and demanded to know what they intended. They made no reply, but he was forced forward, arms raised behind, head down in front—the most hopeless physical attitude for any man. He perceived that they were nearing the water, and then he saw a boat. Into this he was thrown by O'Reilly, and Wilson pushed the boat off with a powerful shove. The tide was making outwards, and the boat was soon a score of yards from shore.

"You can work your arms free, McCulloch," yelled Wilson. "There's a fortnight's supplies in the boat, and no oars. And now make the best of it. You're too damn dangerous. It's our lives against a lot of niggers. Good luck to you!"

The ebb was flowing fast; McCulloch was helpless; and the boat passed swiftly out to sea and away from Manira. McCulloch never saw the island again. It was sixteen days afterwards that we picked him up.

The Doctor paused for quite a long time.

"And that was all?" asked one of the company.

No (he replied slowly), not quite; nearly. McCulloch died, as I told you. We finished the patrolling south, and the *Seagull* went north again. The captain decided to put into Manira, and did so. It was a pretty island, set in a prettily foaming sea, and under a sky of infinite blueness. I went ashore to inspect, and found the settlement deserted. There was nothing there but wreck, debris, and—

well, you know what else. There was only one course of action, and after sending word to the captain I took it. The huts and all that they signified and held went up in one conflagration; the flames mounted to heaven, and drew down from the hills and the jungle some frightened people. These were the remnants of the population, who had taken refuge from the plague, and were ill-fed, unclothed, and demoralised. I knew nothing of their language, and could learn nothing. But we did what was possible, and put out stores and left them seeds to carry on. Later a relief ship was sent from Auckland.

Then I went round to the plantation. Fire had been busy there in patches. The village was practically wiped out, and as I landed I saw a white man's work and judgment in that. In the house there were two live men, and one was dying. This was Wilson, emaciated and motionless upon his pallet, and the live man was a native, one of those faithful hearts which we whites find now and then everywhere among inferior races, a dumb, devoted animal, tending his stricken master.

Wilson was far gone, but on seeing me he rallied, and brightened.

"Where do you spring from?" he asked with difficulty.

I told him, and spoke of McCulloch.

"Dead?" he asked, and when I assented, went on weakly, "They all died. They all began to go. I burnt the cottages. Wilks went first, and then O'Reilly. I buried the boy last of all" . . . and he sank into silence.

I did everything possible, but it was hopeless. Just before the end he lifted his head.

"McCulloch!" he exclaimed, and fixed me with his eye. "Was I right?"

I did not answer, and he repeated the question almost vehemently, "Was I right?" and then ere I could answer fell back. "Anyway, it's done," he murmured.

He never spoke again.

Well, it's easy to lay down ethical principles in the drawing-room, the study, or the church. But on the battlefield—I don't know. I have often wondered, and put that last unanswered question to myself. Which was right, Wilson or McCulloch?

HENRY LAWSON

B. 1867

WHEN THE SUN WENT DOWN

JACK DREW sat on the edge of the shaft, with his foot in the loop and one hand on the rope, ready to descend. His elder brother, Tom, stood at one end of the windlass and the third mate at the other. Jack paused before swinging off, looked up at his brother, and impulsively held out his hand :

“ You ain’t going to let the sun go down, are you, Tom ? ”

But Tom kept both hands on the windlass-handle and said nothing.

“ Lower away ! ”

They lowered him to the bottom, and Tom shouldered his pick in silence and walked off to the tent. He found the tin-plate, pint-pot, and things set ready for him on the rough slab table under the bush shed. The tea was made, the cabbage and potatoes strained and placed in a billy near the fire. He found the fried bacon and steak between two plates in the camp-oven. He sat down to the table but he could not eat. He felt mean. The inexperience and hasty temper of his brother had caused the quarrel between them that morning ; but then Jack admitted that, and apologised when he first tried to make it up.

Tom moved round uneasily and tried to smoke ; he could not get Jack’s last appeal out of his ears—“ You ain’t going to let the sun go down, Tom ? ”

Tom found himself glancing at the sun. It was less than two hours from sunset. He thought of the words of the old Hebrew—or Chinese—poet ; he wasn’t religious, and the authorship didn’t matter. The old poet’s words began to haunt him : “ Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

The line contains good, sound advice ; for quick-tempered men are often the most sensitive, and when they let the sun go down on the aforesaid wrath that quality is likely to get *them* down and worry them during the night.

Tom started to go to the claim, but checked himself, and sat down

and tried to draw comfort from his pipe. He understood his brother thoroughly, but his brother never understood him—that was where the trouble was. Presently he got thinking how Jack would worry about the quarrel and have no heart for his work. Perhaps he was fretting over it now, all alone by himself, down at the end of the damp dark drive. Tom had a lot of the old woman about him, in spite of his unsociable ways and brooding temper.

He had almost made up his mind to go below again, on some excuse, when his mate shouted from the top of the shaft :

“ Tom ! Tom ! For Christ’s sake come here ! ”

Tom’s heart gave a great thump, and he ran like a kangaroo to the shaft. All the diggers within hearing were soon on the spot. They saw at a glance what had happened. It was madness to sink without timber in such treacherous ground. *The sides of the shaft were closing in.*

Tom sprang forward and shouted through the crevice :

“ To the face, Jack ! To the face, for your life.”

“ The old workings ! ” he cried, turning to the diggers. “ Bring a fan and tools. We’ll dig him out.”

A few minutes later a fan was rigged over a deserted shaft close by, where fortunately the windlass had been left for bailing purposes, and men were down in the old drive. Tom knew that he and his mates had driven very close to the old workings.

He knelt in the damp clay before the face and worked like a madman ; he refused to take turn about, and only dropped the pick to seize a shovel in his strong hands, and snatch back the loose clay from under his feet ; he reckoned that he had six, or, perhaps, eight feet to drive, and he knew that the air could not last long in the new drive—even if that had not already fallen in and crushed his brother. Great drops of perspiration stood out on Tom’s forehead, and his breath began to come in choking sobs, but he still struck strong, savage blows into the clay before him, and the drive lengthened quickly. Once he paused a moment to listen, and then distinctly heard a sound as of a tool or stone being struck against the edge of the new drive. Jack was safe !

Tom dug on until the clay suddenly fell away from his pick and left a hole, about the size of a plate, in the “ face ” before him. “ Thank God ! ” said a hoarse strained voice at the other side.

“ All right, Jack ? ”

" Yes, old man ; you are just in time ; I've hardly got room to stand in, and I'm nearly smothered." He was crouching against the " face " of the new drive.

Tom dropped his pick and fell back against the man behind him.

" Oh, God ! my back ! " he cried.

Suddenly he struggled to his knees, and then fell forward on his hand and dragged himself close to the hole in the end of the drive.

" Jack ! " he gasped, " Jack ! "

" Right, old man ; what's the matter ? "

" I've hurt my heart, Jack ! Put your hand—quick ! . . . The sun's going down."

Jack's hand came out through the hole, Tom gripped it, and then fell with his face in the damp clay.

They half carried, half dragged him from the drive, for the roof was low and they were obliged to stoop. They took him to the shaft and sent him up, lashed to the rope.

A few blows of the pick, and Jack scrambled from his prison and went to the surface, and knelt on the grass by the body of his brother. The diggers gathered round and took off their hats. And the sun went down.

THAT THERE DOG O' MINE

HENRY LAWSON

MACQUARIE the shearer had met with an accident. To tell the truth, he had been in a drunken row at a wayside shanty, from which he had escaped with three fractured ribs, a cracked head, and various minor abrasions. His dog, Tally, had been a sober but savage participator in the drunken row, and had escaped with a broken leg. Macquarie afterwards shouldered his swag and staggered and struggled along the track ten miles to the Union Town Hospital. Lord knows how he did it. He didn't exactly know himself. Tally limped behind all the way, on three legs.

The doctors examined the man's injuries and were surprised at his endurance. Of course they would take him in, but they objected to Tally. Dogs were not allowed on the premises.

"You will have to turn that dog out," they said to the shearer, as he sat on the edge of a bed. Macquarie said nothing.

"We cannot allow dogs about the place, my man," said the doctor in a louder tone, thinking the man was deaf.

"Tie him up in the yard then."

"No. He must go out. Dogs are not permitted on the grounds."

Macquarie rose slowly to his feet, shut his agony behind his set teeth, painfully buttoned his shirt over his hairy chest, took up his waistcoat, and staggered to the corner where the swag lay.

"What are you going to do?" they asked.

"You ain't going to let my dog stop?"

"No. It's against the rules. There are no dogs allowed on the premises." He stooped and lifted his swag, but the pain was too great, and he leaned back against the wall.

"Come, come now! man alive!" exclaimed the doctor, impatiently. "You must be mad. You know you are not in a fit state to go out. Let the wardsman help you to undress."

"No!" said Macquarie. "No. If you won't take my dog in you don't take me. He's got a broken leg and wants fixing up just—just as much as—as I do. If I'm good enough to come in, he's good enough—and—and better." He paused awhile, breathing painfully, and then went on. "That—that there old dog of mine has follered me faithful and true these twelve long hard and hungry years. He's about—about

the only thing that ever cared whether I lived or fell and rotted on the cursed track."

He rested again; then he continued: "That—that there dog was pupped on the track," he said, with a sad sort of a smile. "I carried him for months in a billy-can, and afterwards on my swag when he knocked up. . . . And the old slut—his mother—she'd foller along quite contented—and sniff the billy now and again—just to see if he was all right. . . . She follered me for God knows how many years. She follered me till she was blind—and for a year after. She follered me till she could crawl along through the dust no longer, and—and then I killed her, because I couldn't leave her behind alive!"

He rested again.

"And this here old dog," he continued, touching Tally's upturned nose with his knotted fingers, "this here old dog has follered me for—for ten years; through floods and droughts, through fair times and—and hard—mostly hard; and kept me from going mad when I had no mate nor money on the lonely track; and watched over me for weeks when I was drunk—drugged and poisoned at the cursed shanties; and saved my life more'n once, and got kicks and curses very often for thanks; and forgave me for it all; and—and fought for me. He was the only living thing that stood up for me against that crawling push of curs when they set onter me at the shanty back yonder—and he left his mark on some of 'em too; and—and so did I." He took another spell. Then he drew in his breath, shut his teeth hard, shouldered his swag, stepped into the doorway, and faced round again.

The dog limped out of the corner and looked up anxiously.

"That there dog," said Macquarie to the Hospital staff in general, "is a better dog than I'm a man—or you too, it seems—and a better Christian. He's been a better mate to me than I ever was to any man—or any man to me. He's watched over me; kep' me from getting robbed many a time; fought for me; saved my life and took drunken kicks and curses for thanks—and forgave me. He's been a true, straight, honest, and faithful mate to me—and I ain't going to desert him now. I ain't going to kick him out in the road with a broken leg. I—Oh, my God! my back!" He groaned and lurched forward, but they caught him, slipped off the swag, and laid him on a bed.

Half an hour later the shearer was comfortably fixed up. "Where's my dog?" he asked, when he came to himself.

"Oh, the dog's all right," said the nurse, rather impatiently. "Don't bother. The doctor's setting his leg out in the yard."

MARY GAUNT

B. 1894

THE DOCTOR'S DRIVE

"THE Mails has got to go through."

Peter Miles was store-keeper and postmaster at Bilson's, and had been store-keeper there ever since Bilson's was any place at all, and postmaster ever since the Government had seen fit to open a post-office. His motto was, and he stuck to it, "The mails has got to go through." Rain or sunshine, flood or drought, snow or fire, "the mails has got to go through." And this January day the wind was howling like a demon possessed. Down through the narrow gully it tore, a veritable blast from a fiery furnace—the green things shrivelled up before its breath, the tall trees, their great branches tossed hither and thither like twigs, bent and snapped, and every now and then one was rent up by the roots and, falling, crashed among its fellows, and with its wide-spreading roots, which left mother earth so reluctantly, brought away part of the hillside; even above the howling of the wind could be heard the slow slipping and sliding of the loosened earth as it fell towards the roadway. No sunshine to-day, no scrap of blue sky, the heavy clouds hung low, clouds of smoke they were, and the strong smell of that smoke and the aromatic scent of burning gum leaves was heavy in the air.

Just in front of the little store stood the mail-coach, and the horses were being yoked up—only a small coach to-day, but there were four horses—four horses that were laying back their ears and kicking and plunging as if they did not like the job before them. The driver, a tall, lithe young fellow of five-and-twenty, with a slouch hat drawn down over his eyes and fastened with a leather thong under his chin, stood watching the final touches being put to the harness and the mail bags being brought out and flung into the boot and put on top of the coach. There were a good many mail bags to-day; usually the big coach would have taken them through, but the weather was so threatening that Miles on his own responsibility had decided to send them along in the little coach he kept for emergencies. "The mails has got to go through," and the sooner they got through the better on a day like this.

"No passengers?" asked the driver laconically. "You'd better send a man along to help then, case of trouble."

Peter Miles looked thoughtfully down the road and rubbed his bald forehead hard.

"I was thinking——" he began, and then hesitated, and one of the stable helps, with his hair coming through the broken crown of his straw hat, laughed ironically.

"Sweet day for a *passee*," he said; "the hills'll be in a blaze long before you reach Bethambia."

"Lucky if we reach Bethambia unsinged, eh, old man?" said the coach-driver grimly, as he gathered up the reins and prepared to mount the box. "Now which of you fellows is coming along?"

Still Peter Miles shaded his eyes and looked along the road. The howling of the wind deadened all other sounds, and the thick smoke and haze made it impossible to see very far; still he looked out expectantly and delayed the coach yet another five minutes. The secrets of the telegraph were his, and he could not betray them; but he knew well enough the contents of that urgent telegram he had sent along to the doctor an hour ago. There was still time for him to catch the coach, and he hesitated to let it go without him.

The horses grew more impatient, and so did the driver.

"Come, old man," he said, "give the word. You're risking our lives."

"Hold on one minute. Here he is! Here he is!"

Through the haze and smoke dashed a man on horseback.

"Here, I say, hold on a minute; I'm coming too."

"Better not, doctor," said the lean coachman, "we're going to have a hell of a time."

"Must," said Dr. Smith, dropping from his horse and throwing his bag inside the coach. "Now shall I come up in front?"

The driver nodded.

"Look after my horse, Miles," cried the doctor, scrambling to the box-seat and settling himself there.

It was lucky he was young and active, for the horses were more impatient than ever now, and the driver, with a quite unnecessary crack of his whip, gave them their heads.

"It'll be hell for leather, Mat," cried he of the straw hat, as the stable helpers jumped aside to let the swaying coach pass, and Mat nodded his head.

Up the road, straight up the hill, swept the horses right in the teeth of the wind, and Bilson's was left behind in the gathering haze.

"Where 're you goin' to, doctor?" asked Mat as they steadied down to a trot, for the hill was steep and the wind strong.

"To Coulson's—just this side of Bethambia, isn't it?"

A faint smile stole over Mat Jackson's impassive face.

"Eh, I thought they'd be wantin' you there. It's her first, you see, and Jim Coulson's mighty set on her. But it's an uncommon awkward time she's chosen."

"They always do," murmured the other out of the depths of his experience. "Never mind, they'll take it more coolly next time."

"I'd have ridden through, if I was you," said the driver. "You'd have done it easier."

But the other shook his head.

"I've been riding all the morning," said he. "And I never got to bed at all last night. I reckoned on getting some sleep in the coach once we get through this smother."

"Lordy! we ain't goin' to get through this. All the ranges are on fire way back there. I reckon we'll be lucky if we get through at all. It's gettin' worse."

"Ye gods and little fishes! It can't be worse."

"Oh, can't it? Just you wait an' see."

"I'm bound to get through."

"So's the mails. And once we top this hill it'll be neck or nothing with us. Say the word, doctor; will you go back?" And the driver slightly checked his horses.

"Can't we get through?"

He raised his head. The smoke made his eyes smart, and he pulled down his hat over them, but it was little good, it was all round them, heavy and dense. On either hand the tree-tops were shut out as by a pall, and even the leaders were only visible to the men on the box as through a dense grey haze.

Mat, the driver, took a long breath, then pushed back the flapping brim of his hat, and, standing up, took a long look round.

Nothing but dense grey smoke and trees swaying and tossing in the wind seen dimly through it.

"Well, we mout get through. I've seen it worse—only the farther we go, the less chance of getting back if it's too bad to go on. And

it ain't pleasant, let me tell you, to be roasted alive without any preliminary preparation. And it's kinder anticipatin'."

The doctor smiled grimly.

"As bad as that?" he said.

"Well," drawled the driver, "it mout be, and it mout not. The wind mout drop, you know, or it mout shift, or it mout rain, or it moutn't be as bad as I think. There's a hundred chances agin things goin' wrong. But if we meet the fire two or three miles on ahead there, I tell you, doctor, it isn't much I'd give for your chance of seein' Jim Coulson's wife through her trouble. But then again, we moutn't meet the fire; but I'm telling you the truth, if I hadn't the mails behind me, it's on the back track I'd be this minute."

"And if the mails can get through, I can," said the doctor. "I reckon we'll go on, Mat."

"Right you are, boss," and he leaned over and touched the off leader, who was fretting herself into a foam over the smoke, with his long whip.

Then the doctor pulled down his straw hat over his eyes again, and in spite of the discomfort of his seat and his doubts as to the safety of his situation, fell into an uneasy doze. The heat was overpowering, the smoke grew denser than ever, and every now and then he was dreamily aware that his companion was exhorting him to keep awake, to hold up and look out that he did not fall off. He was rather afraid of this last accident himself, and grasped the iron rail of the box-seat with a firm hand, and then kept starting wide awake, thinking he had lost it. If he could only have wakened himself up thoroughly, he would have made an effort and gone inside as safer, but dead beat as he was the smoke and the heat made him drowsier than ever, and he kept putting it off and putting it off till of a sudden the horses were pulled to a standstill with a jerk that threw them on to their haunches.

"God Almighty!" he heard Mat's voice in horror and dread. "We're dead men!"

Then he sat upright in a moment, and rubbed his eyes.

It was darker now, much darker, though it was but two o'clock in the afternoon, the wind was wilder than ever as it tore shrieking through the trees, and the smoke denser and more choking; but that was not the worst, for right ahead, directly in their path, was a lurid glare thrown right on the heavy smoke banks.

The doctor sat up and rubbed his eyes sleepily, for the moment hardly grasping the gravity of the situation.

"What's the matter, Mat?"

The coach-driver pointed with his whip.

"The fire, right ahead," he said. "Both sides of the track, too. The scrub's thick and the track's narrow. We're dead men, doctor."

The doctor stood up and looked back; but the driver anticipated his thought.

"No good, doctor, we can't go back. The fire'd be on us before you could say Jack Robinson. And it would stop with us all the way. It's due south is Bilson's, and the wind's dead from the north."

The solitary passenger looked to the right and left, but the scrub was close and thick; the country was poor enough, but the messmate grew up thick and bushy, and in between was tea-tree and bracken and twining creepers and prickly shrubs of which he did not know the names. But it was close enough; there was no escape that way either for man or beast.

"It's sorter different when it comes to the point, doctor, isn't it?" said the driver. "All very well to talk o' gettin' the mails through, neck or nothing, till you have to do it; but to drive into that muck of smoke an' fire—the Lord ha' mercy upon us."

"Is it the only way?"

"The only way. We're not above three miles from Bethambia." And he brought down the whip heavily across the horses' backs. "Now then, fellows, for all you're worth."

The doctor put his hand down and gripped firmly the rail as the coach plunged forward and rocked from side to side; but he said nothing. There was nothing left for him to say.

"Let's get it over, in God's name," cried the driver, and he lashed the horses to a hard gallop. They kicked and plunged and snorted in terror, for the breath of the fire was upon them now, but the hand that held them was firm and strong, and the cruel whip came down on their backs unerringly. There was no turning back for them either.

The hot wind was hotter than ever now; the mouth of the furnace was open, and it was pouring forth smoke and flame. The reek of it was in their nostrils, and the doctor pulled his hat down closely over his face.

"Look out you don't choke and fall off," said the driver grimly. "I couldn't stop if I wanted to."

"All right," said his companion, and looking out again he noted that the air was full of burning gum leaves. They fell on the frightened horses and on the mail bags, and his own coat was already smouldering in one or two places, and right ahead was the fire. On either side scrub and bracken and tall trees were all one mass of flame, and momentarily it came nearer, borne on the fierce wind.

The horses saw it too and stopped dead, plunging and fighting to be free, and though Mat stood up in his seat and lashed them with a hand made desperate by stern necessity, they were desperate too, and they swerved aside and turned from the track to the right, bringing the coach sharply against a tree-trunk.

"Good Lord!" cried Mat in desperation. "Rats in a hole!"

"We'll have to blindfold them," said the doctor. "Give me that necktie of yours, they'll never face it as it is—and your handkerchief. Now, don't leave me behind."

It is hardly an easy matter to blindfold a horse at any time, but never surely did it take so long as that day, when the minutes were so precious. Young Willie Smith cursed the fate that had sent him out from civilisation many times, as he struggled for that plunging off leader's head, but it was done at last—all four horses were blindfolded, and he scrambled up to the box again as the driver lashed them to a gallop.

He wondered if it would be a good move. How could those terrified horses take the coach along that rough track, now scattered over with living coals as the burning branches and twigs fell upon it? But it was their only chance. Mat's hands were firm and strong, and the horses answered to the guiding rein. The fire was on either hand now, their faces were blistering under the heat, every piece of wood and ironwork was too hot to touch, and the horses stumbled every now and then where a fall would mean certain death. He bowed his head in his hands. This was the end then. All his high hopes, all his ambition, and his little sweetheart waiting for him so patiently till he could make a home for her up here among the mountains. All, all was lost; this was the end. How long now, how long? Then the driver's voice broke in on his reverie.

"The mails are afire, doctor. Couldn't you put them out? Take this waterproof apron."

The waterproof apron had been pulled up to shield their own legs; but no matter—if Mat were so faithful to his trust, he could

not be less so, and with his pocket-knife he ripped it up, and turning round threw it across the mail bags. It didn't half cover them, and he had to crawl half over them and put out the blaze with his fingers. Sometimes he managed to get the waterproof in between his bare hand and the fire, but always that was not practicable, and the mails were such inflammable material, before he got one place out another would be alight. His hands grew sore and painful but he hardly noticed it, only the smoke was so choking and the heat so fierce he could only wonder they held on so long.

First one horse stumbled, then another, but the practised hand of the driver drew them to their feet again. The off leader was down on her knees once, and the coach gave such a lurch he gave up all for lost, while he mechanically laid his arm across the corner of the woodwork that burst into flame.

"Do that again," said Mat between his teeth, "and it's all up with us." But the mare, helped by his guiding hand, struggled to her feet again.

A burning branch fell right across the top of the coach, miraculously sparing the two men on the box-seat, and the doctor, with a great effort, flung it off. Another fell right in front of the horses, but the track luckily was wider here, and Mat managed to draw horses and coach a little aside. It was only clever hands that did it at that headlong pace, but it was done, and they were a little nearer the end.

How long? How long?

Eyebrows, eyelashes, hair were all singed by the flames; the curtains in the coach windows were on fire, and the horses—their scanty harness was red-hot, and the white handkerchief he had tied round the eyes of one of the leaders was already smouldering. The end *must* come soon now, things could not go on like this any longer.

"Woa, there. Steady, good mare. Hold up, will you?" And the whip came down with a heavy crack across the backs of the stumbling horses.

Crash! And a tall tree fell close alongside them, and men and coach and horses received the burst of sparks that flew around them.

"It is the end," cried the doctor, his lips cracked and swollen and his mouth dry and parched, yet still making one last effort to put out with his bare, burnt hands the fire that was kindling afresh among the mails.

"By the living God! no," shouted the driver. "We're through! My God! we're through!"

Then the other man turned his head and looked through the dense haze with red-rimmed, smoke-weary eyes, and he saw that his companion spoke the truth. Behind them was the fire, behind them the flames dancing yellow and red and blue in the heavy smoke, and here—here was only the path of the fire, hot wind, heavy smoke, dense and thick as ever. The breath of the fire had passed, and every living thing was dead. The tall trees were blackened, smoking skeletons, in which the red fire still smouldered, and the air was full of the soft, white, powdery ash that had once been bark and green leaves. But they were safe, safe! and in a few more yards Mat drew up the horses, and they put out the last remnants of the fire that had clung to the coach.

Then they were off again, and in another five minutes were clattering down the road into the township of Bethambia.

The township had fought for its life, and at the first roadside cottage they came across a little knot of men armed with branches and sacks, and looking scarcely less dishevelled than the newcomers themselves. These had been beating back the fire from the township.

"And it was a mighty close shave," said one of them, stepping forward. "But, lordy! Mat, whatever brought ye through on a day like this?"

"The mails, Jim Coulson," said Mat, drawing himself up with dignity, "has got to go through, an' they're through. An' here's the doctor for your missus."

Then a woman made her appearance in the doorway, winding up her hands in her long white apron.

"Is it the doctor?" she asked. "Oh, doctor, I'm that sorry, but the baby was born more than half an hour ago. Just as fine a child as ever you set eyes on, bless him!"



